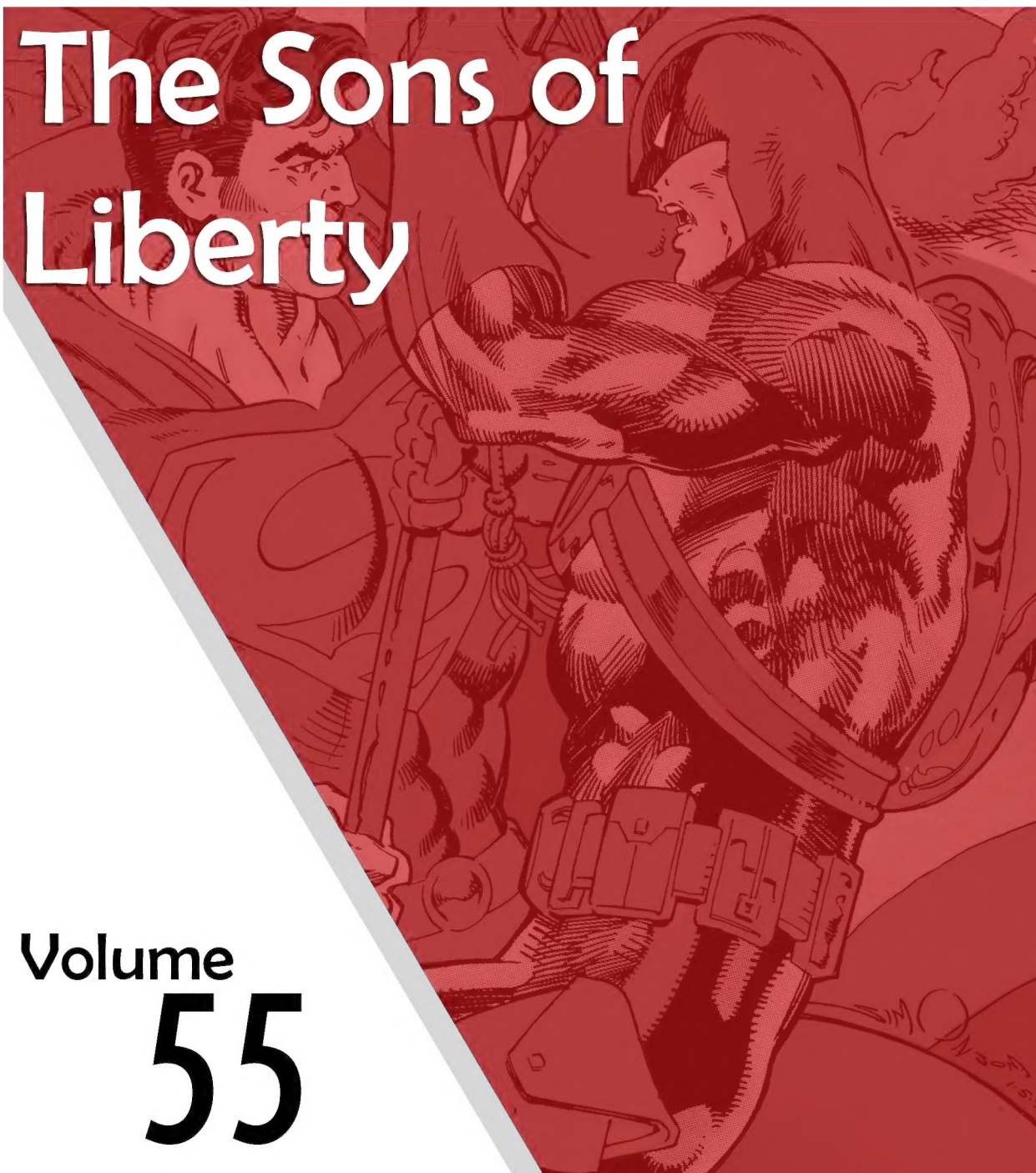
SUPERMAN

Post-CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS

The Sons of Liberty



Volume 55

SUPERMAN Post-CRISIS The Sons of Liberty 55

ALMERAC OR BUST!

WELL, PEOPLE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ACES, MAX! SIMPLY ACES!

DAN JURGENS story/drawing

RICK BURCHETT finished inks

WILLIE SCHUBERT letters

GENE D'ANGELO colors

BRIAN AUGUSTYN spiritual guide

GLAMOUR BOY'S RIGHT, LORD! IF THIS PLACE IS *REALLY* OURS I MIGHT BE ABLE TO STAND HAVIN' YOU AROUND AGAIN!

OH, IT'S OURS, ALL RIGHT.

AS LONG AS WE PROVIDE THE UNITED NATIONS WITH SECURITY THEY'VE AGREED TO LEASE US THIS COMPLEX WHICH STANDS ADJACENT TO THEIR OWN.

IT'S COSTING US A FORTUNE, AND IT ISN'T QUITE COMPLETE--

--BUT *THIS* PROVIDES THE LEAGUE WITH THE IMAGE THEY *DESERVE!*

IT'S HUMONGOUS! LIKE WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WITH ALL THE SPACE?

ARE YOU *KIDDING*, BEA? WE NEED ALL THE ROOM WE CAN GET FOR YOUR WARDROBE ALONE!

...SIGH... IT'S BEAUTIFUL...

YOU WANTED THIS OUTFIT TO LOOK LIKE A NUMERO UNO ORGANIZATION AND YOU GOT YOUR WISH, BEETLE!

SUPPOSE THERE'S ROOM TO OPEN UP A DISCO IN IT?

IS *SUPERMAN* AWARE OF THIS, MAX? YOU *KNOW* HE DOESN'T LIKE YOU TO ACT WITHOUT CONSULTING *HIM!*

HOW CAN I *TELL* HIM WHEN I CAN'T EVEN *CONTACT* HIM? IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED--

--THE GUY ISN'T EVEN HERE! YOUR BIG, BLUE BOY SCOUT MIGHT TALK A GOOD GAME--

--BUT HE HASN'T BEEN AROUND FOR DAYS!

NOW LET'S MOVE INSIDE AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE GRAND TOUR!

OBOYOBOYOBOYOBOY!

AND SPEAKING OF SECURITY, WE FINALLY HAVE SOME.

WE WERE ALWAYS GETTING UNWANTED VISITORS BACK AT THE OLD EMBASSY, RIGHT?

WELL, IT WON'T HAPPEN HERE.

RETINA SCANNERS.

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. AS MAXWELL LORD. ENTRY PERMITTED.

ALL COMPLIMENTS OF *KILOWOG*. HE DOES GOOD WORK!

THIS IS *GREAT!* 7-ELEVEN HAS BETTER SECURITY THAN THE EMBASSY DID! CAN WE GO IN?

CERTAINLY! THIS IS OUR MAIN MEETING ROOM! I THINK YOU'LL AGREE IT HAS A *GREATER* SENSE OF *GRANDEUR* THAN OUR OLD PLACE DID!

NO ARGUMENT THERE! WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHO'S PAYING FOR THIS? THE JLA DOESN'T HAVE *THIS* KIND OF MONEY, DOES IT?

IF IT DOES I WANT A *RAISE!*

THE UNITED NATIONS IS FINANCING THIS VENTURE. DESPITE OUR AUTONOMY THEY REALIZE IT'S BENEFICIAL TO WORK *WITH* US!

EVEN THOUGH THEY DISMANTLED US A FEW MONTHS BACK? KIND OF HARD TO BELIEVE...

WHO *CARES* WHO'S FOOTING THE BILLS?

BUG'S RIGHT! WE FINALLY GOT A JOINT WITH CLASS! IF THE U.N. WANTS TO FOOT THE BILL, LET 'EM!

LET'S FACE IT! THE WHOLE FLAMIN' WORLD *OWES* US BIG TIME. IN FACT--

"-- THE WHOLE UNIVERSE DOES TOO!"

I CAN'T BELIEVE I ESCAPED ALL THOSE GUN SHIPS!

I TOOK SEVERAL HITS BUT I MANAGED TO ELUDE THEIR KILLING SHOTS AND HUNTER SQUADRONS! I'M THE FIRST TO ESCAPE!

BUT I'VE MADE IT! EARTH IS ONLY MINUTES AWAY! IF I CAN ONLY FIND HER WE MAY YET BE SAVED!

WHO KNOWS HOW MANY HAVE DIED? TENS--HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS? MILLIONS, PERHAPS.

ALMERAC IS BEING DESTROYED--

--AND ONLY MAXIMA CAN SAVE US!

SHE IS OUR QUEEN! OUR LEADER BRED TO RULE AND CONQUER! ONLY MAXIMA CAN DELIVER US FROM THE MADMAN WHO--

WARNING! WARNING!

COMPUTER? WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?

A STRAY SHOT DESTROYED THE ATMOSPHERIC ENTRY SYSTEM. THIS CRAFT WILL BE UNABLE TO LAND INTACT.

I DON'T CARE! I MUST ALERT HER HIGHNESS! IF I CAN LOCATE HER WITH MY SENSORS--

THIS CRAFT IS INCAPABLE OF A SAFE LANDING. THE LIKELIHOOD OF YOUR SURVIVAL--

DOESN'T MATTER! I HAVE TO TRY!

ALL SYSTEMS HAVE FAILED.

ABORT LANDING. REPEAT. ABORT--

SPLASH

TSSSS

BOOSTER, BEETLE, COME WITH ME, PLEASE. WHILE THE OTHERS EXPLORE ON THEIR OWN--

--I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING OF PARTICULAR INTEREST.

WE'RE GOING *DOWN?*

NATURALLY. WE ADDED SUBTERRANEAN LEVELS FOR SEVERAL REASONS.

LAB? WE HAVE A LAB? I THINK I'M IN *HEAVEN!*

IT'S ALL YOURS, BEETLE! RIGHT DOWN AT THE END OF THE HALL! AND IF YOU LOOK OUT THE WINDOW--

--I THINK YOU'LL SEE SOMETHING THAT WILL *REALLY* MAKE YOU HAPPY!

SEXY, PROVOCATIVE MERMAIDS SWIMMING BEFORE OUR VERY EYES?

ONE: WE NEEDED THE ROOM.

IN THE SLIMY, POLLUTED EAST RIVER? YOU KIDDING ME, BOOSTER? I-- *LOOK AT THAT!*

KILOWOG BUILT YOU A NEW BUG WITH SEVERAL MODIFICATIONS!

IT WILL STAY PERMANENTLY DOCKED UNDER-WATER, CONNECTED BY AIRLOCK TO THE MAIN COMPLEX--

TWO: IT PROVIDES AN ADDED SAFETY FACTOR FOR OUR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND LABORATORY STATIONS.

THAT'S IT! I *KNOW* I'M IN HEAVEN!

OF COURSE. WE BUILT THE COMPLEX WITH *EVERYBODY'S* WISHES IN MIND.

YOU TWO, FIRE, ICE, BLOODWYND. EVEN--

"--MAXIMA!"

SACRED GODS!

SOMETHING REACHES INTO MY MIND! WHO *DARES* ATTACK MAXIMA!

NO--NOT A PSYCHIC ATTACK!

A SIGNAL!

A SIGNAL I MUST RESPOND TO--

--EVEN THOUGH IT EMANATES FROM THE DEPTHS OF THIS MURKY RIVER!

NEVERTHELESS, THE SIGNALS COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN SENT BY SOMEONE FAMILIAR WITH ME! SOMEONE FROM ALMERAC!

YES! A DISABLED CRAFT FROM MY OWN IMPERIAL GUARD!

BUT WHAT IS IT DOING HERE ON *EARTH*?

AND WHO LIES WITHIN?

MY PSIONIC POWER TO BEND METAL WILL GAIN ME EASY ACCESS AND HOLD OUT THE WATER--

IN ORDER TO SOLVE THIS GROWING MYSTERY!

HIGHNESS... IS THAT... YOU?

THERE-- IN THAT POCKET OF AIR!

SH'KIRRY! CAPTAIN OF MY *PERSONAL* GUARD!

SPEAK, MY SERVANT! WHAT COMPELS YOU TO JOURNEY SO FAR?

ALMERAC... BELOVED MOTHER WORLD TO US ALL--

--NOW QUIVERS BENEATH A *MURDERER'S* BOOT HEEL!

DURING YOUR ABSENCE... ONE SO EVIL... SO *VILE*... HAS COME TO *CONQUER!*

ONLY *YOU* CAN SAVE US! ONLY YOU CAN STOP THE ONE KNOWN AS ST--ST--

--uhmmm.

SACRED GODS, I COMMEND TO YOU THIS SOUL OF A WARRIOR MOST PROUD!

A SOUL STOLEN BY *DEATH*--

--BECAUSE I WASN'T ON MY THRONE WHERE I BELONG!

THERE IS BUT ONE COURSE. I--

--MUST LEAVE.

I DO NOT KNOW WHEN I WILL RETURN.

HEY, NO PROBLEM, YOUR ROYALNESS! HAVE FUN!

TAKE AS LONG AS YOU WANT, SPACE CHICK!

WAIT A MINUTE! WHY ARE YOU LEAVING? WHERE'S THE FIRE?

ALMERAC HAS FALLEN UNDER THE OPPRESSIVE RULE OF A *TYRANT!*

MY PEOPLE NEED ME TO FREE THEM FROM HIS MANIACAL WAYS.

YO, IF YOU WANT A LITTLE HELP KICKIN' SOME SERIOUS BUTT, YOU KNOW WHO TO CALL!

ARE YOU *NUTS*, GARDNER? IT'S *HER* PLANET--NOT *OURS!* LET HER MAJESTY TAKE CARE OF HER *OWN* PROBLEMS!

MAXIMA KNOWS NO OTHER WAY!

ONCE I RETRIEVE MY STARSHIP FROM THE JUSTICE LEAGUE CAVE--

--THERE WILL BE *WAR!*

MAN, AM I GLAD TO SEE HER GONE! SHE NEVER DID FIT IN!

AAAIEEEEEE!

THAT SCREAM! IT SOUNDED LIKE *FIRE!*

AWRIGHT! SOMEBODY MUST BE ATTACKIN' US!

NO. WORSE. SOMETHING TELLS ME SHE MAY HAVE SEEN--

"--THE LATEST ISSUE OF *NEWSTIME!*"

DID YOU SEE WHAT THIS POND SCUM MISTER WAINWRIGHT WROTE ABOUT ME?

HE'S WRITTEN A LIST OF THE TEN WORST-DRESSED SUPERHEROES AND HE ACTUALLY PUT *ME* ON THE LIST!

REALLY? WHICH NUMBER?

EXCEPT FOR THE RED TORNADO AT NUMBER 10, I FILLED OUT THE REST!

LIKE, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? *NINE SLOTS!*

IT SOUNDS LIKE MISTER WAINWRIGHT IS JUST TRYING TO HAVE SOME FUN AT YOUR EXPENSE, BEA.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THIS WILL DO TO MY MODELING CAREER? I'LL BE A LAUGHING STOCK!

I MEAN, I DON'T REALLY LOOK THAT BAD, DO I, TORA?

WELL...

TORA!

"...YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT YOUR COSTUME ISN'T IN QUITE THE SAME SPIRIT AS WHAT THE BOYS WEAR!"

WELL, WELL, WELL. LOOKS LIKE THAT LONER BREAKWYND HAS DECIDED TO JOIN THE PARTY AGAIN!

HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR QUARTERS, BLOODWYND?

IF THERE'S ANYTHING SPECIAL YOU WANT FOR YOUR APARTMENT SPACE--

--JUST GIVE ME A LIST AND I'LL BE SURE TO HAVE IT INSTALLED FOR YOU.

PLEASE LEAVE IT *EMPTY*, MISTER LORD. I'D PREFER TO SUPPLY MY OWN FURNISHINGS.

AS YOU WISH.

ME, I WANT HOT AND COLD RUNNING CHAMPAGNE!

WHAT'S THE BIG SECRET, BLOODWYND? DON'T WANT TO TIP US OFF AS TO WHO YOU ARE BY TELLING US WHAT YOU NEED?

"LOOK, WE DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT YOU! WHERE YOU COME FROM, WHO YOU ARE--

--ALL WE KNOW IS THAT YOU CAN WHIP UP SOME PRETTY GOOD MAGIC TRICKS!

IDENTITY CONFIRMED. ENTRY PERMITTED.

I WILL TELL YOU ONLY THAT WHICH YOU NEED TO KNOW. MY LIFE--

--IS MY *OWN*.

A RECEPTIONIST? I DON'T BELIEVE IT! WHERE'S LORD?

IN THE MAIN CHAMBER, MISTER...

MAXWELL LORD!

UH-OH...

BEEN NICE KNOWING YOU, MAX.

WE'LL TALK ABOUT THIS LATER, LORD.

BELIEVE ME, WE'LL TALK.

RIGHT NOW I WANT MAXIMA.

I HAVE A WARRANT FOR HER ARREST!

NO LIE? WHAT'D SHE DO, BLUE? STEAL SOMEONE'S PERSONALITY?

HARDLY. THE CHARGE ACTUALLY DATES BACK A FEW MONTHS.

SHE ALLEGEDLY KILLED A MAN DURING HER FIRST VISIT TO METROPOLIS.*

*ACTION COMICS 645 --YE OLDE EDITOR.

YOU'RE OUT OF LUCK, SUPERMAN! SHE'S GONE BACK HOME!

ONE OF HER SUBJECTS CAME HERE AND WARNED HER OF A USURPER TO HER THRONE! HE CRASHED HIS SHIP IN THE EAST RIVER IN THE PROCESS.

INCREDIBLE! WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE SHIP?

THIS AIN'T NO *SALVAGE* OPERATION! LET IT SIT ON THE BOTTOM WITH THE REST OF THE TOXIC WASTE!

EXACTLY MY POINT, GUY! THERE'S NO TELLING *WHAT* KIND OF TOXIC CONTAMINATION--

--AN EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL CRAFT COULD HAVE!

GUY, BOOSTER, YOU'RE COMING WITH ME! WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT SHIP DOESN'T POSE A DANGER TO EARTH!

WE GONNA BLOW THE SUCKER UP?

NO. WE'RE GOING TO *RAISE* IT--

"--AND BRING IT BACK HERE FOR A THOROUGH ANALYSIS!"

HOW MUCH LONGER DO I HAVE TO KEEP THIS AIR-TIGHT SEAL AROUND THAT BUGGY? I GOT *BETTER* THINGS TO WASTE TIME ON!

YOU CAN DROP IT, GUY! SHE SEEMS HARMLESS ENOUGH!

I HOPE YOU'RE CERTAIN OF THAT, BEETLE.

THIS LAB MIGHT NOT BE TOTALLY COMPLETE--

--BUT THERE'S ENOUGH EQUIPMENT HERE TO GIVE IT A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH!

MIGHT I SUGGEST A CLOSER INSPECTION? PERHAPS THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE THAT WILL INDICATE ITS PURPOSE HERE.

YECCH! WE'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING WITH THIS BODY!

LESSEE... THERE *IS* SOME KIND OF COMMUNICATION DEVICE, BUT I DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA OF HOW TO TURN IT ON!

PRESS THE FOURTH AND SEVENTH BUTTONS FROM THE RIGHT.

SOUNDS AS GOOD AS ANYTHING! AFTER ALL, WE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE--

HEY! HOW'D YOU KNOW WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT?

I DELVED INTO YOUR MIND THAT I MIGHT SEE WHAT YOUR EYES SEE.

I AM ALSO ACQUAINTED WITH ALIEN TECHNOLOGY.

YOU'RE TROUBLE, BLOODWYND! AND I'M GOING TO--*HEY!* IT WORKED!

IT'S A PROJECTOR WITH SOME SORT OF MESSAGE! ALMOST AS THOUGH--

GREAT SCOTT!

MY LADY MAXIMA, SHOULD I FAIL TO FIND YOU I HAVE RECORDED THIS MESSAGE IN HOPES THAT IT WILL FALL INTO YOUR HANDS.

I BRING YOU A MESSAGE OF GREAT SADNESS AND TRAGEDY FROM ALMERAC.

AS YOU KNOW, THE INFIDEL *BRAINIAC* CONQUERED OUR PLANET SEVERAL MONTHS AGO WITH HIS MIGHTY *WARWORLD*.

BY JOINING HIM, YOU STOPPED HIS PLAN TO COMPLETELY OVERRUN AND INCINERATE THE PLANET.

BUT EVEN AFTER HIS DEFEAT* YOU STAYED ON EARTH AND LEFT US TO FEND FOR OURSELVES.

AND WITH OUR DEFENSES EXHAUSTED WE WERE NO MATCH FOR THE *NEW* CONQUERORS WHO ARRIVED IN BRAINIAC'S WAKE!

*AS SHOWN IN RECENT SUPERMAN TITLES.

THE CONQUERORS WERE LED BY ONE SO VILE... SO *EVIL* THAT HE PERSONALLY EXECUTED ALL GOVERNORS LOYAL TO YOU.

IN THE WEEKS SINCE HIS ARRIVAL HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS HAVE DIED AND THOSE WHO ARE LEFT LIVE IN TOTAL *FEAR* THAT THEY ARE NEXT!

IT IS ALMOST AS THOUGH HE *FEEDS* ON THAT FEAR! HIS NAME IS-- BLIP--BLIP--BLIP--

BROKEN. THE REST OF THE MESSAGE WAS PROBABLY DESTROYED IN THE CRASH!

NO MATTER. I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.

WE'RE GOING TO *ALMERAC!*

NO WAY!

WE'RE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE OF *AMERICA*-- NOT THE *UNIVERSE*! WE CAN'T GO GALLOPING OFF INTO DEEP SPACE--

--TO OVERTHROW EVERY GOVERNING BODY WE DON'T LIKE! WE DON'T HAVE THE *RIGHT*... OR THE *MEANS*!

WE *STAND* FOR SOMETHING, BOOSTER!

WE STAND FOR CERTAIN IDEALS AND RIGHTS! YOU PROBABLY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT BECAUSE ALL *YOU'VE* EVER STOOD FOR--

--IS A *QUICK BUCK*!

THAT'S *LOW*, MAN! I JUST MEAN WE SHOULD ATTEND TO *EARTH* BUSINESS!

BOOSTER HAS A POINT, SUPERMAN. WHY SHOULD WE OVERTHROW A RULER ON ANOTHER PLANET?

WE WOULDN'T EVEN DO THAT TO A COUNTRY LIKE QURAC HERE ON EARTH!

EVEN IF ALMERAC AIN'T IN MY SECTOR, I SAY WE GO THERE AND *RUMBLE*!

FINALLY-- YOU AGREE WITH ME ABOUT SOMETHING. CAN *YOU* TAKE US THERE?

QUICKER THAN SNOT THROUGH A GOOSE, BLUE!

THEN GET MOVING.

Y'KNOW, I'M NOT SO SURE I LIKE YOUR TONE!

NOBODY ORDAINED YOU TO CHARGE AROUND HERE BARKIN' OUT ORDERS!

I GOT NEWS FOR YOU, PAL--WE DO FINE ON OUR OWN!

MAYBE *YOU'RE* SORE AT LORD FOR BUILDIN' THIS DUMP WITHOUT GETTIN' YOUR EXPRESS *WRITTEN PERMISSION*--

BUT THE REST OF US *LIKE IT*!

GUY! HOW *DARE* YOU TALK TO SUPERMAN THAT WAY!

BACK OFF, ICE QUEEN. YOU WANNA DEFEND THE BIG BOY SCOUT--

DO IT ON SOMEONE ELSE'S TIME! ME?

I GOT NO TIME TO HEAR IT!

GUY! YOU-- YOU'VE *NEVER* TALKED TO ME THAT WAY BEFORE!

CAN WE ALL STAY *FOCUSED* ON THE ISSUE AT HAND HERE? THERE'S A JOB THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!

ARE YOU COMING WITH ME OR DO I DO IT *ALONE?*

OKAY, OKAY! WE'LL ALL GO! SAY, HAS ANYONE SEEN FIRE?

SHE IS PREOCCUPIED WITH HER *NEW* COSTUME.

HOW DO *YOU* KNOW ABOUT THAT? SHE HASN'T TOLD ANYONE EXCEPT *ME!*

DID I HEAR MY NAME MENTIONED?

LET'S GO. I WANT TO GET BACK IN TIME TO GET PUBLICITY PHOTOS SENT OUT.

COOL.

VERY *NICE*, BEA!

RAD!

HOT, BABE!

PEOPLE...

Uh-oh! PRINCIPAL SUPERMAN IS GETTING UPSET! BETTER GET IN LINE, CHILDREN!

I CAN'T *BELIEVE* WE'RE *ACTUALLY* GOING TO ANOTHER *PLANET!*

YOU GOT IT, FUTURE BOY! NEXT STOP--

"--ALMERAC!"

IMPERIAL SPACE CRAFT APPROACHING! CONCENTRATE ALL LASER BATTERIES ON THE TARGET--

--AND FIRE!

HOW DARE THEY FIRE AT LADY MAXIMA HERSELF!

THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!

DESPITE THIS CRAFT'S ABILITY TO WITHSTAND ALMOST ANY BARRAGE--

--THIS ONE IS FAR TOO STRONG!

I MUST LAND WHILE THERE'S STILL TIME!

TIME TO TURN THE TIDE OF THIS BATTLE--

--BY ATTACKING THE ROYAL CASTLE ITSELF!

SACRED GODS! SOMEONE ACTUALLY DARES TO RESIDE HERE!

THERE! HE EVEN DEIGNS TO SIT ON *MY* THRONE!

STAND TO BATTLE, USURPER--

--SO THAT I MIGHT SEND YOU TO THE DEEPEST PITS OF *HELL* ITSELF!

YOU WISH TO ENGAGE *ME* IN COMBAT?

YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL OF WHAT YOU WISH FOR, DEAR GIRL. FOR IN THIS CASE--

--YOU WILL MOST ASSUREDLY BE DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULT.

THIS IS IT, KIDDIES! ALMERAC!

WOW! AN ALIEN PLANET! CAN YOU BELIEVE IT, BEETLE?

KINDA MAKES ME WISH I'D BROUGHT A CAMERA, BOOSTER!

ENOUGH CHATTER. WE HAVE TO GET MOVING BEFORE WE'RE DISCOVERED.

YEAH. NO SENSE GETTING PINCHED BY IMMIGRATION FOR NOT HAVING PASSPORTS!

OKAY, LET'S SPLIT INTO TEAMS FOR RECONNAISSANCE AND MEET BACK HERE TO FORMULATE A PLAN.

WHO THE FLAMIN' HELL NEEDS A *PLAN*?! I SAY WE JUST GO FIND THE HEAD DESPOT--

--AND BUST HIS SKULL OPEN!

GUY!

SUPERMAN'S PLAN IS FAR MORE *PRUDENT* AND *SENSIBLE*! WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS CONTRADICT HIM?

DEAR, DEAR ME. HOW COULD I *EVER* HAVE BEEN SO RUDE?

I MUST CONFESS THAT I AM TERRIBLY, TERRIBLY--

--PEEVED!

WHAT'S THE DEAL, TORA? AIN'T I THE *ONE* WHO GOT US *HERE*? AIN'T I THE *ONE* WHO'S BEEN WITH THE LEAGUE *ALL* THIS TIME? WHY DO YOU *ALWAYS* WANNA LISTEN TO *HIM*?

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT HE'S ALWAYS BARKIN' ORDERS CUZ HE THINKS HE'S *BETTER* THAN US?

YOU *KNOW I'M* THE ONE WHO OUGHTA BE *BOSS*! YOU *KNOW*--

KNOCK IT OFF, GARDNER. YOUR HYSTERICS *AREN'T* WELCOME IN THIS SITUATION.

THAT *TEARS* IT! THIS LEAGUE AIN'T *BIG* ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US, BLUE! SOMEBODY'S GOTTA GO!

WHO'S IT GONNA BE, GANG? *ME*? OR THE BIG BLUE *UMPIRE* OVER THERE?

WELL?

FINE.

I DON'T NEED YOU BABBLIN' IDIOTS *ANYWAY!* WITH THAT DWEEB *JORDON* COMIN' BACK TO EARTH--

--I GOT *MORE* THAN ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT!

I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING. HOW THE *HECK* DO WE GET *BACK* TO EARTH WITHOUT GUY?

HEY, NO SWEAT! SUPES WILL GET US BACK, *WON'T* YOU, SUPES?

I MEAN, YOU *CAN* FLY US *BACK*, CAN'T YOU?

NO.

DON'T WORRY, THOUGH. GARDNER WILL BE BACK.

YOU'RE NUTS! NO WAY IS GUY COMING BACK!

WE'RE STRANDED HERE, SUPES!

STRANDED...

I SUGGEST WE FOLLOW SUPERMAN'S EARLIER ADVICE AND SCOUT THE PLANET.

WE MUST ASSESS OUR FOE'S STRENGTH.

LIKE, DO YOU THINK IT'S *REALLY* NECESSARY? I MEAN, MAYBE MAXIMA'S ALREADY *BEATEN* HIM!

SHE DOES SEEM TO BE A PRETTY TOUGH COOKIE.

DOUBTFUL.

YOU KNOW THIS GUY? WHY DIDN'T YOU CLUE THE REST OF US IN?

IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO PUT THE CLUES TOGETHER. BUT IF IT'S WHO I THINK IT IS--

--WE MAY NOT HAVE TO *WORRY* ABOUT HOW WE'LL RETURN TO EARTH.

LIKE, YOU DON'T THINK THIS GUY WILL *KILL* US, DO YOU?

SUPERMAN, I AM TRULY *TOUCHED* THAT YOU REMEMBER ME!

I HAVE MY SUSPICIONS AS TO WHO'S BEHIND THIS CONQUEST.

IF I'M RIGHT, IT'S SOMEONE THE LEAGUE AND I FACED LONG AGO.

THAT YOU REMEMBER THE AWESOME KILLING FORCE OF--

STARBREAKER!

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE REVENGE OF STARBREAKER

DAN JURGENS
story and art

RICK BURCHETT
finished art

WILLIE SCHUBERT
letters

GENE D'ANGELO
colors

BRIAN AUGUSTYN
editor

I KNEW STARBREAKER WAS BEHIND THIS! SPREAD OUT-- QUICKLY!

OTHERWISE WE'RE AN EASY TARGET!

FRIGHTFULLY EASY!

BUT YOU IN THE SCARLET CAPE. YOU SPEAK AS THOUGH WE'VE MET.

AND I DO FIND YOU VAGUELY FAMILIAR...

SUPER...? OF COURSE! HOW COULD I HAVE FORGOTTEN?

YOU'RE THE KRYPTONIAN! THE SUPERMAN!

YOU WERE ONE OF THOSE WHO IMPRISONED ME ALL THOSE YEARS AGO!*

YOUR ACCURSED JUSTICE LEAGUE AND THEIR WHINY, SELF-INDULGENT GUARDIANS OF THE UNIVERSE--

--SOUGHT TO ENTOMB ME FOR ETERNITY?

I'VE BATTLED THIS MAN, BEETLE! NOW FAN OUT AND PREPARE FOR ATTACK!

AW, HE DOESN'T LOOK SO NASTY TO ME! WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

WHATEVER YOU SAY, SUPERMAN!

*WAY BACK IN THE ORIGINAL JLA #97 MARCH, 1972. ARCHIVAL AUGUSTYN.

NICE TRY, BUT YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER! AND NOW--

--REVENGE!

NICE TRY, STAR-BOOGER!

BUT NO FANCY EYE BEAMS--

--ARE GONNA ACE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!

ZZZAK

JUSTICE LEAGUE? DON'T BE ABSURD!

--YOU'RE NO JUSTICE LEAGUE!

WHERE IS YOUR GREEN LANTERN? YOUR WINGED MEMBER?

TIMES CHANGE, STARBREAKER! I DON'T KNOW *HOW* YOU GOT OUT OF THE GUARDIANS' STASIS CHAMBER--

--BUT WE'RE PUTTING YOU BACK IN!

HE JUST *DROPPED* SUPERMAN WITH-OUT BREAKING A SWEAT!

I *KNEW* WE SHOULDA STAYED ON EARTH!

OF *COURSE*, YOU WILL, DEAR BOY!

OF COURSE YOU *WILL*.

SILENCE, BLUE BEETLE. I AM USING MY *MAGICS* TO PROBE STARBREAKER'S MIND--

--IN HOPES OF FINDING HIS WEAKNESS.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD--GRANT ME STRENGTH.

STRENGTH ENOUGH TO PIERCE THIS CREATURE'S MIND--

--AND SOUL, THAT I MIGHT DEFEAT HIM.

CONTACT.

SUPERMAN WAS CORRECT.

STARBREAKER EMBODIES EVIL. HIS POWER IS POTENTIALLY BEYOND DESCRIPTION.

HIS IS THE ABILITY TO ABSORB LIMITLESS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY AND RELEASE IT IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.

HE BEGINS BY CONQUERING A PLANET, TERRORIZING IT, ACTUALLY FEEDING ON THE FEAR HE GENERATES IN THE POPULACE.

AN INVADER--IN MY... MIND? NOOO!

ONCE THE EMOTIONS HAVE EMPOWERED HIM, HE ACTUALLY MOVES THE PLANET INTO THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF THE NEAREST SUN--

--AND ABSORBS THE EXPLOSIVE ENERGY THAT RESULTS FROM THE ENSUING COLLISION.

HE IS, IN EFFECT, A COSMIC VAMPIRE FEEDING OFF THE ENERGIES OF OTHERS.

HOW... HORRIBLE!

STAY AWAY... FROM HIM...

I SAID... OUT!

ARRGH!

CAN'T... CAN'T...

YOU CAN'T ATTACK STARBREAKER WITHOUT A PLAN!

YEARS AGO-- ON ONE OF THE OCCASIONS WHEN I ASSISTED THE ORIGINAL LEAGUE...

IT TOOK OUR COMBINED STRENGTHS TO DEFEAT HIM! AND EVEN THEN HE ALMOST WON!

HE CALLED HIMSELF THE MOST POWERFUL MAN IN THE UNIVERSE, AND HE MIGHT BE RIGHT!

HE WAS SO STRONG...SO POWERFUL...THAT WE COULD ONLY ENTRUST HIM TO THE GUARDIANS!

THEY SEALED HIM IN STASIS AND SENT HIM INTO THE VOID OF SPACE FOR ALL ETERNITY.

OR SO THEY THOUGHT.

DEAR, DEAR, SUPERMAN, THEY MIGHT ACTUALLY HAVE SUCCEEDED--

--HAD I NOT BEEN PULLED IN BY A WANDERING SPACE FREIGHTER.

THE POINT IS, YOU'RE *FREE.*

BUT *WE'RE GOING TO CHANGE* THAT!

CHANGE? DEAR BOY, I AM A *LIVING BATTERY!*

I KNOW *ALL ABOUT* CHANGE!

I KNOW HOW TO CHANGE *ENERGY* ITSELF!

--UNTIL IT *DOES WHATEVER* I WISH!

I CAN DEFEAT YOUR FRIEND'S FORCE-FIELD BY *SURROUNDING* HIM IN ONE OF MY OWN CREATION!

AS FOR *YOU* SUPERMAN, HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE *BOMBARDED* BY THE *DESTRUCTIVE* FORCE OF A NOVA?

KA-ZAP

YOU MAY HAVE TAKEN *THEM,* HOTSHOT, BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE US *ALL!*

YOU EARTH TYPES HAVE SUCH INDEFATIGABLE IMPRESSIONS OF YOUR-SELVES!

FAP

ONLY SUCH AS YOU WOULD SEEK TO DEFEAT ME WITH SUCH SIMPLE MEANS.

YOU SIMPLY DO NOT COMPREHEND *WHOM* YOU FACE!

IMAGINE MY VAST POWERS DIRECTED *INWARD*--

--AND THE ENERGY DUPLICATES I CAN CREATE.

EACH OF US ABLE TO ACT *SIMULTANE-OUSLY*--

--AND *INDIVIDUALLY.*

NOW, ISN'T THAT JUST *SPECIAL*? YOU COULD FIELD YOUR OWN *BASEBALL* TEAM!

YOU STILL *DON'T* UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?

I UNDERSTAND ONLY THE NECESSITY OF RENDERING YOU *HELPLESS.*

ZZAPP

OF COURSE, BUT IT'S A GOAL--

--YOU SHALL *NEVER* ACHIEVE.

YEAH? WELL LISTEN UP, MISTER COSMIC VAMPIRE! YOU THINK YOU HAVE ENERGY TO *BURN*?

WAIT'LL YOU GET A LOAD OF *THIS!*

OH, I *LOVE* YOUR ENERGY, DEAR LADY.

IN FACT, I CAN'T WAIT TO TAKE *MORE* FROM YOU.

UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS MY *LIFE*... MY REASON *AND* MEANS OF EXISTENCE.

AND YOURS--

--HAS ONLY SERVED TO MAKE ME *STRONGER*. THANK YOU.

Uhnn...

BUT WE HAVE DALLIED TOO LONG.

LET THIS FARCE END.

FOR THERE IS *MUCH* I MUST YET DO WITH THIS *SMOLDERING* PLANET.

ZAASH

AND STRANGE AS IT MAY SOUND, YOU INTREPID JUSTICE LEAGUERS MAY ACTUALLY PROVIDE SOME *ASSISTANCE*.

COME--

"--WE HAVE PLACES TO BE."

TAE TAMRAC. ALMERAC'S ROYAL CITY.

FOR MONTHS THIS ONCE PROUD AND NOBLE CITY HAS DESCENDED EVER FARTHER INTO THE MUCK AND THE MIRE.

THOSE THAT ARE STILL ALIVE SUFFER THE EXISTENCE OF THE DAMNED.

MOTHERS MUST EXPLAIN TO THEIR CHILDREN THAT THERE IS NO FOOD...THAT THEY MUST AGAIN SLEEP WITH THE GNAWING SENSE OF STARVATION.

STILL LIVING CADAVERS KILL THE WEAK FOR MEAGER POSSESSIONS THEY MIGHT BARTER FOR MEDICINE OR FOOD.

FIRES BURN OUT OF CONTROL WITHOUT WATER TO EXTINGUISH THEM.

WITHOUT SEWAGE PLANTS THE STENCH OF MAN POOLS IN THE STREETS.

MOTHERS, UNABLE TO FIND DOCTORS OR HOSPITALS, KNOW ONLY DESPAIR--

--AS THEY BURY THEIR STILLBORN BABIES IN THE RUBBLE OF THE CITY.

AND FOR THOSE WHO CAN NO LONGER BEAR THE DESPAIR--

--THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY OUT.

THIS IS ALMERAC'S MOST GLORIOUS CITY.

AND HER WEARY, LIFELESS RESIDENTS--

--HAD THOUGHT THEY'D SEEN IT ALL--

UNTIL TODAY.

DO YOU SEE HOW THEY FEAR ME?

CAN YOU FEEL THE OVERWHELMING SENSE OF DREAD THEY FEEL IN MY PRESENCE?

THEY KNOW WHAT MY MIGHTY MECHANIX CAN DO-- THEY'VE WITNESSED IT FIRSTHAND!

AND SEEING YOU ALL SECURED AS MY PRISONERS--

--ANY FAINT HOPES OF RESCUE THEY HAD--

--HAVE SURELY VANISHED!

IT'S-- HORRIBLE! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!

THEN YOU'VE NEVER LOOKED IN BEETLE'S CLOSET!

STILL, WE HAVE A CHANCE! STARBONER THERE ISN'T AS SMART AS HE THINKS!

WHEN THESE METALLIC GOONS GATHERED US UP HE FORGOT SOMEONE!

MAXIMA!

SHE STIRS.

DESPITE THE BATTERING SHE'S TAKEN--

--DESPITE THE WEAKNESS THAT LEAVES HER EXHAUSTED--

--SHE HAS A PLANET TO RECLAIM.

AND SHE INTENDS TO DO IT.

OFF PLANET?

OFF PLANET?

WHO IN THE NAME OF SANITY *AUTHORIZED* THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE* TO GO *OFF PLANET?*

UMMM.. *SUPERMAN* DID, MAX.

HECK, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW.

HE FIGURED IT WAS A JOB THAT NEEDED DOING AND TALKED THE GANG INTO GOING.

WHO DOES THAT RED AND BLUE, FLAG-WAVING BOY SCOUT THINK HE IS?

THAT MAN IS *REALLY* STARTING TO BUG ME!

GRANTED, HE MAY ADD SOME NECESSARY *POWER* AND *CLASS* TO THIS OUTFIT'S WOEFUL IMAGE--

--BUT HE'S TRYING TO RUN *MY* SHOW! I *BUILT* THIS LEAGUE! AND SUPERMAN IS BECOMING A-- A--

COMPETITOR, MAX?

LOOK, SUPERMAN HAS DONE A LOTTA GOOD HERE. THESE GUYS ARE A HECKUVA LOT *TIGHTER* AND MORE *FOCUSED* THAN THEY USED TO BE!

EVEN GARDNER SEEMS TO BE MINDIN' HIS "P's" AND "Q's"!

PERHAPS. BUT I STILL DON'T APPRECIATE BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS.

A *GALAXY-GALLOPING* JUSTICE LEAGUE IS A PROBLEM I DON'T CARE TO HAVE!

SPEAKIN' OF PROBLEMS, TAKE A HARD LOOK AT BLOODWYND! THERE'S SOMETHIN'... *WEIRD* ABOUT HIM, MAX!

I'M STILL TRYIN' TO FIGURE OUT HOW HE GOT TO BE A *MEMBER!* I MEAN--

--I HOPE IT WASN'T A MISTAKE LETTIN' HIM *JOIN!*

SO THIS IS THE BIG NEWS.

JUSTICE LEAGUE REBORN.

LOOKS NICE. NOT AS NICE AS A SATELLITE, BUT NICE. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS--

--MAYBE I SHOULD GIVE THESE GUYS ANOTHER LOOK.

THIS RATHER IMPRESSIVE INSTALLATION LOOKS FAIRLY SECURE.

THERE PROBABLY ISN'T A MAN ALIVE WHO COULD PENETRATE ITS DEFENSES--

--EXCEPT ME.

HANG ON TO YOUR HATS, BOYS AND GIRLS--

"--I'M COMIN' IN."

LET ME IN! I *DEMAND* ENTRY!

I--I-- *LADY MAXIMA!* IT REALLY *IS* YOU!

I... *DEMAND* THAT YOU STAND ASIDE... AND GRANT ME *SHELTER!*

I ALSO NEED FOOD... AND WATER...

MY LADY, WHATEVER AILS YOU SO?

ENOUGH! PAY HER NO MIND!

EVEN IF I *HAD* PROVISIONS I'D NOT SHARE WITH *YOU!*

WHAT--?

PAPA! THIS- THIS IS OUR *QUEEN!*

NOT *MINE!* NOT *ANYMORE!* THIS LUMP OF IMMORAL FLESH IS *NO ONE'S* QUEEN!

SHE *BETRAYED* US ALL! WE *STARVE* BECAUSE OF HER!

YOU ARE *MY* SUBJECTS! TO TREAT ME THIS WAY--

--IS TO COURT A *DEATH* SENTENCE!

LOOK AROUND HERE! WE'RE *DEAD* ALREADY!

YOU *ABANDONED* US TO APPEASE *BRAINIAC*--

--AND THEN STAYED AWAY WHEN *STARBREAKER* INVADED!

THAT MANIAC HAS ALREADY *SLAUGHTERED* COUNTLESS NUMBERS--

--AND WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER THE REST OF US ARE SURE TO JOIN THEM!

I LEFT FOR THE FUTURE OF ALMERAC! TO FIND--

YOU LEFT US TO FIND A *MATE* TO SIRE YOUR HEIR!

BUT THE IRONY IS THAT EVEN IF YOU *WERE* WITH CHILD--

"--STARBREAKER WILL MAKE SURE HE HASN'T A PLANET LEFT TO RULE!"

AH, YOU FINALLY AWAKEN, DEAR ONES.

I FEARED I'D HAVE TO GO AHEAD WITHOUT YOU.

GO AHEAD WITH... WHAT?

PLANNING TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE? YOU KNOW--

--LIKE AN *INTELLIGENCE TRANSPLANT* FOR BOOSTER?

AH. THE SO-CALLED HUMAN WIT. NO WONDER I'D FORGOTTEN IT.

LOOK, STARBREAKER, IF YOU'RE PLANNING WHAT I THINK YOU ARE--

OF COURSE I AM, KRYPTONIAN. I *NEED* IT. I *EXIST* FOR IT.

AFTER ALL, IF THAT SPACE FREIGHTER HAD BROUGHT MY "COFFIN" ANYWHERE BUT HERE--

--I MIGHT STILL BE A FORGOTTEN CARCASS.

FORTUNATELY THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN OPENED MY PRISON JUST AS WARWORLD WAS ATTACKING.*

THE RAW ENERGY SURGING THROUGH THE AIR EASILY *REVIVED* ME.

AS I ABSORBED IT I BECAME MORE AND MORE POWERFUL UNTIL I WAS ABLE TO TAKE OVER.

AND WITH REGARD TO ENERGY--

*SEE THE "PANIC IN THE SKY" SERIES IN RECENT *SUPERMAN* TITLES--YER PAL BRIAN.

"--IT IS TIME FOR ME TO *UTILIZE* YOURS."

WELCOME TO ALMERAC'S POLAR REGIONS.

ITS CRUCIAL AXIS POSITION MAKES IT THE *PERFECT* PLACE--

--FOR AN *EXECUTION.*

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT US TO DO? CHALLENGE YOU TO A SNOWBALL FIGHT TO THE DEATH?

YOU MISUNDER-STAND, DEAR BOY. I'M NOT HERE TO EXECUTE *YOU.* YOU ARE HERE TO EMPOWER *ME.*

ONCE I SIPHON YOUR ENERGIES I-- I--

BY THE GREAT NEBULA!

I CAN SENSE THE *ENORMOUS* POWER YOU EMBODY! IT *EXCEEDS* EVEN SUPERMAN'S!

WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE *ARE* YOU?

THE ENERGY I STEAL FROM *YOU--*

--WILL *MORE* THAN ACCOUNT FOR YOUR INSECTOID COMRADE'S LACK OF SUCH.

WOW! I NEVER REALIZED BLOODWYND PACKED SUCH A PUNCH!

THEN AGAIN, IT'S NOT LIKE HE'S EVER TOLD US *ANYTHING* ABOUT HIMSELF!

IF WE EVER GET OUT OF THIS FIX--

--I'M GOING TO *SOLVE* THE BLOODWYND QUESTION *ONCE AND FOR ALL!*

AH, THE *FORBIDDEN JUNGLES.*

A REGION SO DENSE, SO HOT AND STEAMY THAT IT'S VIRTUALLY *UNINHABITABLE.*

IT MEETS MY REQUIREMENTS PERFECTLY.

REQUIREMENTS? LOOKING FOR A GOOD PLACE TO BUILD YOUR CONDO, STARRY?

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU NEED US FOR!

I MEAN, DO YOU PLAN TO *LEAVE* US HERE? OR MAYBE EVEN KILL US?

AH, DEAR GIRL, I HAVE NO DESIRE TO TAKE YOUR LIVES.

I MERELY WANT TO TAKE--

--YOUR *POWERS!*

HE'S DOING IT *AGAIN!* DRAINING THE ENERGY RIGHT OUT OF ME!

THE *BATTERIES* THAT POWER MY UNIFORM..HE'S SUCKING THEM *DRY...*

INDEED.

AND SOON, WHEN MY *DUPLICATES* HAVE POWERED UP TO MATCH MY LEVELS--

--I SHALL *FINALLY* LIVE UP TO THE NAME OF *STARBREAKER!*

WELCOME TO THE SITE OF ALMERAC'S MOST DEVASTATED CITY.

BRAINIAC'S WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION TURNED A THRIVING COMMUNITY INTO A *WASTELAND.*

ISN'T IT *GLORIOUS?*

CAN YOU DO ANYTHING...TORA? I'M STILL...TOO WEAK...

ME TOO! IF THE CAVALRY IS COMING IT HAD BETTER GET HERE *SOON.*

IF *GUY GARDNER* WASN'T SUCH A *HOTHEAD* HE COULD SAVE US ALL!

THOUGH YOU WERE YOUNGER WHEN WE FIRST MET--

--YOU SURELY UNDERSTAND WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO, SUPERMAN.

WEAK THOUGH YOU ARE--

--YOU BOTH STILL HARBOR *INCREDIBLE* AMOUNTS OF ENERGY FOR ME TO UTILIZE.

THIS BOMB CRATER LIES OVER A *MAJOR* FAULT IN ALMERAC'S CRUST.

MY ENERGY DUPLICATES WILL *DRAIN EVERY* BIT OF ENERGY THEY AND THEIR CAPTIVE HAVE--

--AS WILL I.

WHAT KIND OF LEADER AM I TO LET MY TEAM *FAIL* THIS WAY?

HE'S *DOING* IT!

STARBREAKER IS GOING TO *RIP* THIS PLANET *APART!*

BY ATTACKING THIS PLANET FROM THREE DIFFERENT CORRESPONDING POINTS OF STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS--

I WILL SET IN MOTION A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT WILL CULMINATE--

--IN THE MOST *EXPLOSIVE* CLIMAX OF ENERGY RELEASED *ANYWHERE!*

ENOUGH TO TURN ME--

--INTO A *GOD.*

DEEP INSIDE ALMERAC THE POUNDING FURY UNLEASHED BY STAR-BREAKER CUTS A WIDE SWATH OF DESTRUCTION.

BEDROCK CRUMBLES AND SHIFTS.

TREMENDOUS POCKETS OF GAS BUILD--

--UNTIL THE DELICATE CRUST CAN NO LONGER CONTAIN THEM.

AS THE FISSURES OPEN AND WIDEN, A PLANET SCREAMS IN AGONY.

ONE LONE BEING'S MERCILESS ATTACK HAS TORN INTO ALMERAC.

--AND TURNED IT INSIDE OUT.

THE EXPLOSIONS ARE SO MIGHTY AND CALCULATED--

--THAT THE PLANET SHIFTS EVER SO SLIGHTLY TOWARD THE SUN.

AND THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL THAT ONCE HELD IT STEADY--

--BEGINS TO PULL ALMERAC ON ITS FINAL JOURNEY.

THE HOUR OF ETERNAL DARKNESS IS AT HAND!

IT IS THE END OF ALL AND IT'S HER FAULT!

MAXIMA BETRAYED US!

JUDGE HER DEEDS HERE AND NOW!

THERE IS BUT ONE VERDICT! GUILTY!

GUILTY, GUILTY, GUILTY!!

LET HER SUFFER AT OUR HANDS--

--THE WAY WE HAVE SUFFERED AT HERS!

SO SAY WE ALL! QUICKLY-- BEFORE SHE BECOMES STRONG ENOUGH TO USE HER POWERS AGAIN!

LET THE QUEEN DIE BEFORE THE PLANET--

--BY THE BUBBLE SHE HERSELF IS RESPONSIBLE FOR!

DIE, MAXIMA! DIE!!

THWAP

TKUNK

THUD

BLP

AND SO IT ENDS.

ONLY *ONE* TASK REMAINS.

WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH SUPERMAN?

HE'S *UNCONSCIOUS!* HE CAN'T POSSIBLY HURT YOU ANYMORE!

TRUE ENOUGH, DEAR GIRL. I HAVE TAKEN *ALL* HE HAS.

YET THIS KRYPTONIAN *BESTED* ME ONCE BEFORE. ONLY A *FOOL* WOULD LET HIM LIVE TO TRY AGAIN.

NO...

NOOO!

IN HIS WEAKENED CONDITION HE CANNOT POSSIBLY SURVIVE THE MOLTEN CORE OF ALMERAC.

DIE--AS THIS PLANET DIES, SUPERMAN.

ONCE IT *COLLIDES* WITH THE SUN--

--I BECOME THE MOST *POWERFUL BEING* IN ALL OF CREATION!

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

Of Ashes and JUSTICE

THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN!

AS MAXIMA HAS BROUGHT DEATH TO ALMERAC--

--SO SHALL WE BRING DEATH TO MAXIMA!

DAN JURGENS
writer/artist

RICK BURCHETT
finishing artist

WILLIE SCHUBERT
letters

GENE D'ANGELO
colors

BRIAN AUGUSTYN
editor

I... ACKNOWLEDGE MY GUILT.

DO WHAT YOU WILL.

DAMN RIGHT I WILL, TRAITOROUS B--

BA-MMM

THE ERUPTIONS ARE GETTING WORSE! WE'RE DOOMED!

THIS... THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD!

"THE END!"

SKOOOM

BLAKOWW

MY BELOVED PLANET ALMERAC IS DYING--

KRRRRR

"ALL--"

--AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT.

RRRRR

Ah, DEAR ONES, POOR, SWEET ALMERAC CONTINUES TO *BURN* AND *WRITHE* IN THE THROES OF *DEATH.*

AT LAST I'VE DEALT HER THE *MORTAL* BLOW THAT WILL CARRY HER INTO THE *SUN.*

IN THE RESULTING MASSIVE EXPLOSION AN INDESCRIBABLE AMOUNT OF ENERGY WILL BE *RELEASED!*

AND I'LL BE THERE, EAGER TO *ABSORB* EVERY BIT OF IT--

--UNTIL I BECOME ALL *POWERFUL* AND *UNSTOPPABLE!*

BIG DEAL, SO YOU'RE A HOT-SHOT VILLAIN.

YOU *STILL* WON'T SELL AS MANY RECORDS AS MADONNA.

HEY, STARBREAKER! IF YOU'RE SO *POWERFUL,* WHY NOT LET US OUT OF THIS ENERGY CELL?

Ah, DEAR BOOSTER. WITH EACH PASSING SECOND ALMERAC MOVES *CLOSER* TO ITS FIERY UNION WITH THE SUN.

WHY ENDANGER THAT BY SETTING YOU *FREE?*

Uh... BECAUSE BAD GUYS ARE STUPID *IDIOTS* WHO USUALLY MANAGE TO SCREW THINGS UP?

DON'T YOU SEE THE STORM'S *RAGING* BEHIND ME? HAVEN'T YOU SENSED THAT THE PLANET HAS ALREADY *TIPPED* ON ITS AXIS--

--RIPPING IT FURTHER APART? HOW CAN YOU EVEN THINK I'D POSSIBLY--

--"SCREW THINGS UP" AS YOU SO ELOQUENTLY PUT IT.

BIG TALK, BUT WE'RE GOING TO PUT THE HURT ON YOU! COUNT ON IT!

LIKE, HOW DOES HE PLAN TO DO THAT? I CAN'T GENERATE ENOUGH FLAME TO LIGHT A CIGARETTE!

I KNOW. STARBREAKER HAS WEAKENED US SO MUCH WE CAN'T DO *ANYTHING!*

INDEED. OPENING THREE MASSIVE CHASMS, ACROSS ALMERAC'S SURFACE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE--

--HAD I NOT *BORROWED* YOUR POWERS.

LOOK, MAN, THIS IS *NUTS!* YOU CAN'T JUST WIPE OUT A WHOLE PLANET!

ZZZT

SAVE IT, BOOSTER! WE HAVE TO STAY CALM IF WE'RE GOING TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THIS JAM.

WE NEED THE *CAVALRY!* MAXIMA, GUY GARDNER OR SUPERMAN ARE OUR *ONLY* HOPE!

WHERE *IS* SUPERMAN, ICE? WEREN'T YOU WITH HIM?

I'M NOT SURE--

--BUT I THINK HE'S IN *SERIOUS* TROUBLE.

THE LAST TIME I SAW SUPERMAN HE WAS SO *WEAK* FROM STARBREAKER'S ATTACK THAT HE WAS *UNCONSCIOUS!*

"STARBREAKER WAS STILL AFRAID OF HIM SO HE THREW HIM INTO ONE OF THOSE FISSURES HE'D JUST BLOWN OPEN!

"I KNOW IT WAS DEEP-- *REAL* DEEP! FOR ALL I KNOW, SUPERMAN IS SMACK-DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF ALMERAC'S *MOLTEN CORE!*"

WONDERFUL. THAT MEANS HE'S SUPER *TOAST* BY NOW!

HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN SO *SENSITIVE* AND *CARING*, BOOSTER?

NO. HE'S *NOT* DEAD!

"THIS IS *SUPERMAN* WE'RE TALKING ABOUT! THERE'S NEVER BEEN *ANYONE* LIKE HIM!

"IF ANYBODY CAN FIND A WAY TO SURVIVE THAT *INFERNO*, HE CAN!"

STARBREAKER.

YOU WON'T STOP ME.

RUMBLE

NOTHING--

--WILL--

--STOP--

THIS IS NOT RIGHT.

I HAVE NOT LIVED MY LIFE ONLY TO BECOME A *MURDERER* IN MY FINAL MOMENTS.

I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT I AM NOT *TOO* LATE.

CAN YOU HEAR ME, LADY MAXIMA?

PLEASE FORGIVE US FOR WHAT WE'VE DONE. IT MUST HAVE BEEN FEAR THAT DROVE US TO SUCH... *MADNESS.*

YOU... IT WAS YOUR *HOME** THAT I VISITED. WHY... HELP ME *NOW?*

*LAST ISSUE.

MY FAMILY HAS SERVED YOURS FOR *GENERATIONS*, MY LADY. WHEN YOU CAME TO US I WANTED TO HELP YOU--

--BUT MY *HUSBAND*, WELL... YOU KNOW WHAT *HE* DID.

I *DESERVED* IT.

NO! NO ONE DESERVES TO BE *STONED!* LEAST OF ALL A *QUEEN!*

BUT THIS *IS* ALL MY FAULT! I *AM* RESPONSIBLE FOR ALMERAC'S *DEATH!*

HOW CAN I *NOT* DIE AS WELL?

HEY, WHAT'S THE POINT, MAN? YOU CAN'T BUILD YOUR POWER WITHOUT TRASHING THE PLANET?

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO PROVE?

THAT I'M *BETTER* THAN THEM! BETTER--

--THAN THE HATED *GUARDIANS* WHO JAILED ME! TO PROVE IT--

--I'LL TEAR THEIR *PRECIOUS* UNIVERSE TO *SHREDS* AND ULTIMATELY--

--DO THE *SAME* TO THEM!

MASTER STARBREAKER? WE HAVE COUNSELED THE ROYAL FAMILY HERE FOR YEARS!

THE CITIZENS OF ALMERAC HAVE EMPOWERED US TO GRANT YOU ANYTHING YOU WISH IF YOU'LL ONLY *SPARE* OUR HOME.

OH. WELL.

I SUPPOSE YOU DEAR *CONDEMNED* SOULS FEEL THAT CHANGES... *EVERYTHING!*

GET OUT! YOU HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE ME! I HAVE ALREADY *TAKEN* IT ALL!

ZZZZAKK

YOU INSANE, PATHETIC SHELL OF A MAN. HOW *TRAGIC* THAT WE ERRED IN *NOT* ENDING YOUR LIFE WHEN GIVEN THE CHANCE.

WHO *DARES*--

ONE OF YOUR *JAILERS* DARES.

IS THAT WHO I *THINK* IT IS?

WHERE THE HECK DID *HE* COME FROM?

IF *HE* GOT *IN* HOW COME *WE* CAN'T GET *OUT*?

IF A GUARDIAN IS HERE THEN *GUY* MUST BE NEARBY! HE *HAS* TO BE!

LOOK OUT!

DIE, YOU *FREAK!*

YOUR INADEQUATE POWER CANNOT POSSIBLY PIERCE YOUR *OWN* FORCE FIELD CELL.

THEN I'LL SHUT IT OFF!

I'LL FRY YOUR BLUE HIDE YET, LITTLE MAN!

WE'RE FREE! GOOD THING MY FLIGHT RING STILL HAS ENOUGH JUICE TO WORK!

YEAH, BUT THAT'S THE ONLY THING THAT DOES! HOW DO WE STOP STARBREAKER NOW--

--IF WE COULDN'T DO IT WHEN WE HAD OUR POWERS?

I HOPE HE IS! THE MORE OF YOU TO KILL-- THE BETTER!

DOUBTFUL, CONSIDERING YOU CANNOT EVEN HIT ME.

HEY, ANYBODY SEE BLOODWYND? HE DISAPPEARED!

WE HAVE A CHANCE! WE HAVE THE GUARDIAN AND MAYBE EVEN GUY HERE!

GUY? ARE YOU HERE?

NO. GUY GARDNER IS NOT PRESENT.

IN FACT, IT CANNOT EVEN BE SAID--

--THAT THERE REALLY IS A GUARDIAN PRESENT.

WHAT YOU SAW WAS A RESULT OF MY MAGIC!

CHARLATAN! YOU'LL PAY FOR YOUR DECEIT!

SINCE WHEN DID BLOODWYND HAVE ILLUSION POWERS!?

WHO CARES? FIGHT NOW, ASK QUESTIONS LAT--

URRK!

"--JUST AS I'VE DISMEMBERED ALMERAC!"

I'LL DISMEMBER YOU ALL--

NO, MY LADY, IT'S NOT TOO LATE! SURELY YOU CAN SAVE OUR WORLD WITH YOUR WONDROUS POWERS!

I FEAR I AM STILL TOO WEAK...

THIS DISPLAY OF WEAKNESS SHAMES YOUR ROYAL ANCESTORS, LADY MAXIMA! I IMPLORE YOU--

--TRY! TRY TO SAVE US!

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I SHALL ATTEMPT!

I SHALL DO WHATEVER POSSIBLE--

YES...

"--TO SEE TO STARBREAKER'S *DEFEAT!*"

I THANK YOU ALL FOR PROVIDING ME WITH SUCH GREAT SPORT! WEAK AS YOU ARE--

--BEATING YOU IS CHILD'S PLAY!

HE'S *RIGHT!* I DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT WEIRDO BLOODWYND RAN OFF TO--

--BUT WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE *WITHOUT* HIM! UNLESS--

"--THIS IS A CASE WHERE WE CAN USE MORE *BRAINS* THAN *BRAWN!*"

SACRED GODS! THOUGH I KNEW ALMERAC WAS *DYING*--

--I DID NOT REALIZE ITS WOUNDS WERE SO *TRAUMATIC!* THIS FISSURE IS *ENORMOUS!*

THERE IS ONLY ONE COURSE OPEN TO ME.

I MUST PRAY THAT MY POWERS ARE *REPLENISHED* ENOUGH THAT I MIGHT CONCENTRATE--

--AND *MOVE* THESE MASSIVE SECTIONS OF EARTH *BACK TOGETHER* IN HOPES OF *SEALING* THE FISSURE!

DEFEATING STARBREAKER IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN *SAVING* ALMERAC.

THIS FROZEN WASTELAND'S DESTRUCTION MUST *CEASE.*

A *FORMIDABLE* TASK.

WORMS! WHERE IS THE ONE WHO *DECEIVED* ME? WHERE *IS* HE?

I'M KINDA WONDERIN' THAT MYSELF!

OVER HERE, BOOSTER! *IDEA* TIME!

NOW, *THERE'S* A SCARY THOUGHT! HEY, QUIT *MESSIN'* WITH MY EQUIPMENT! THE POWER CELLS ARE *DEAD* ANYWAY!

EXACTLY! THAT'S *WHY* I'M *INVENTING* OUR WAY *OUT* OF THIS JAM!

I'VE EXAMINED THESE *FUTURISTIC GIZMOS* OF YOURS ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT MAKES THEM TICK.

THEORETICALLY, WE CAN DO SOME SERIOUS DAMAGE BY *PLUGGING* YOU INTO THIS *FORCE FIELD GENERATOR!*

HEY...

YOU *TWO!* WHAT *MISCHIEF* ARE YOU DEAR BOYS PLOTTING?

HEY! YOU'RE MAKING ME A *TARGET!* YOU'RE GONNA GET ME *FRIED!*

IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, WE *ALL* GET FRIED!

AT LEAST YOU GET TO GO *FIRST!*

SOUNDS FINE TO ME.

FZZZAM

FPOWWW

I'M... *STILL HERE?*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE *STOPS* PUTTING OUT THE JUICE?

HE CAN'T. IT'S LIKE SIPHONING GAS. ONCE YOU GET IT START-ED, IT JUST KEEPS ON POURING!

WHAT HAVE YOU *DONE* TO ME?

YOU'RE-- *DRAINING EVERYTHING* I'VE *ABSORBED!*

EXHAUSTING THOUGH THIS IS--

--I HAVE ALMOST MANAGED TO PULL THIS *GAPING* TRENCH BACK TOGETHER.

BUT HOW MUCH GOOD CAN THIS POSSIBLY ACCOMPLISH?

THERE ARE *MANY* FISSURES, AND WEAK AS I AM I CANNOT POSSIBLY--

"--HANDLE THEM *ALL*!"

BRAKAMM

RRRETCH

NICE... TRY. *Uhf!*

BUT...*ungh*... IT TAKES MORE THAN A FEW TONS OF ROCK--

--TO BURY A SUPERMAN!

HAD TO WAIT UNTIL I REGAINED MY STRENGTH TO TRY GETTING OUT--

--BUT I DID IT.

I COULD BREAK THIS THING INTO A MILLION PEBBLES BUT I THINK I CAN PUT IT TO BETTER USE!

IF I CAN JUST GET IT OUT OF HERE IN ONE PIECE--

THERE! WITH A LITTLE HEAT VISION TO SEAL IT, THIS THING IS AS GOOD AS NEW.

ALMERAC'S INNER CORE ISN'T AS VOLATILE NOW--WE MIGHT BE SAFE!

CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER HOW THE LEAGUE IS DOING. CONSIDERING STAR-BREAKER'S MIGHT I CAN ONLY ASSUME--

--THIS MIGHT MAKE A PERFECT CORK TO PLUG THIS HOLE!

KAGHOOM

"--THAT THEY'RE IN *TROUBLE!*"

YOU THINK...

...YOUR *CLEVER* LITTLE *STUNT*...

...HAS *DEFEATED* ME?

DON'T CELEBRATE *TOO*... SOON, DEAR ONES.

MY POWER... *SURPASSES*... *ALL!*

AND THOUGH YOU... MIGHT TRY TO *STEAL* IT--

--I'LL RETAIN *MORE* THAN ENOUGH TO *OBLITERATE* YOU!

I'LL *RIP* YOUR WIRES OUT MYSELF--

--AND *STRANGLE* YOU ALL!

I THINK I'M STRONG ENOUGH TO THROW UP AN ICE SHIELD, TED!

GO TO IT, TORA! I'M TURNING THIS UP HIGH ENOUGH TO DRAIN THE ENERGY FROM A NUCLEAR BLAST!

THIS SHOULD KEEP THAT DESPICABLE MAN AWAY FROM YOU!

NO! I CAN... FEEL IT SLIPPING AWAY!

EVERYTHING...

...SLIPPING AWAYYYY...

WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

CAN'T TELL! I CAN'T SEE A THING!

STARBREAKER IS MAKING HIS MOVE! HE'S GOING TO KILL US ALL!

NO! THAT'S NOT IT! HE--

--HE'S GONE? I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY HOW IT HAPPENED--

--BUT I THINK WE YANKED HIM RIGHT OUT OF EXISTENCE!

WOW! JUST LIKE WHEN THE WITCH MELTED IN "THE WIZARD OF OZ"!

COOL.

YEAH.

IT IS, ISN'T IT?

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THIS--

--BUT I AM IMPRESSED.

I KNEW YOU WERE STILL ALIVE! I NEVER DOUBTED IT FOR A SECOND!

Ah... YES.

WHAT ABOUT STARBREAKER? IS HE DEAD?

ALL THE BETTER IF HE IS!

I DON'T KNOW. I'D THEORIZE THAT STARBREAKER WAS AN ENERGY-BASED CREATURE--

--WHO SIMPLY... DISPERSED!

SUPERMAN!

HEY, NOW THAT STARBONKERS IS OUTTA THE PICTURE, WE BETTER DO SOMETHING TO SEAL THOSE FISSURES BEFORE ALMERAC WINDS UP IN THE SUN!

UNNECESSARY. ALL THE FISSURES ARE SEALED. ALMERAC HAS STABILIZED.

INCREDIBLE! IT WAS TOUGH BUT I MANAGED TO SEAL ONE OF THE FISSURES--

--AND I SUCCESSFULLY CLOSED THE SECOND.

YOU! YOU MUST'VE CLOSED THE LAST ONE WHEN YOU DISAPPEARED ON US!

WE FIND OUT SOMETHING NEW ABOUT YOU EVERY SECOND, MISTER!

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM--AND WHAT ARE YOU ALL ABOUT?

I AM... ME. THAT IS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.

WE, THE COUNSELORS OF ALMERAC, REGRET INTERRUPTING OUR SAVIORS, BUT WE MUST.

EXCUSE US.

WE ARE HERE TO PASS JUDGMENT ON QUEEN MAXIMA.

LATER...

AFTER DELIBERATING FOR SEVERAL HOURS WE HAVE REACHED A *VERDICT*, LADY MAXIMA.

YOUR FAMILY HAS RULED ALMERAC FOR GENERATIONS--

--JUST AS I, MY FATHER, AND HIS FATHER BEFORE HIM, WERE PROUD TO SERVE AS ADVISORS.

BUT YOUR CRIMES AND *NEGLECT* COST US *DEARLY*. CLEARLY, ALMERAC WOULD BE SAFER AND *MORE PROSPEROUS*--

--WITH A *DEMOCRATIC* FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

FOR DISHONORING YOUR ROYAL ANCESTORS *AND* THIS PLANET, YOU ARE HEREBY *EXILED* FROM ALMERAC--

--*NEVER* TO RETURN.

BY...BY YOUR DECREE.

THAT IS HEAVY-DUTY PUNISHMENT! THEY'VE JUST STRIPPED AWAY *EVERYTHING* SHE EVER HAD!

TRUE. MAXIMA HAS *NOWHERE* TO GO.

--EXCEPT *EARTH*.

I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE HER AROUND A *WHILE*.

COLLECT YOUR THINGS AND LEAVE US.

WE HAVE REPAIRED YOUR SPACE CRUISER. YOU'LL FIND IT QUITE CAPABLE OF MAKING THE JOURNEY TO EARTH.

MAXIMA?

SEEING AS HOW THOSE STUFFED SHIRTS REALLY SLAPPED YOU DOWN, I WAS WONDERING IF YOU WERE--

--YOU KNOW... OKAY.

OF COURSE.

I MEAN, IF ANYBODY KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE EXILED FROM HOME IT'S ME!

DID YOU KNOW I WAS FROM THE FUTURE? THE 25TH CENTURY?

NO.

WELL, I AM, AND I MISS IT, TOO! I KNOW IT'LL BE HARD ON YOU, SO I THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE A SHOULDER TO CRY ON!

CRY?

MAXIMA DOES NOT CRY.

I NEED HELP FROM NO ONE.

COME THE SHIP AWAITS

SO MUCH FOR THE SENSITIVE APPROACH.

HOW DO YOU REACH SOMEONE WHO HAS NO SOUL?

CAN WE GET GOING *NOW*? THIS INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL HAS MADE MY HAIR AN ABSOLUTE *MESS!*

AS SOON AS WE GET BACK WE'LL ASK GREEN LANTERN TO CONTACT THE *GUARDIANS.*

YEAH, IF ANYBODY CAN GET ALMERAC CLEANED UP AND IN ITS PROPER ORBIT--

--I SUPPOSE *THEY* CAN.

HEY! WAIT FOR *ME!*

NUTS. HE *MADE* IT!

SHOULD'VE KNOWN WE WOULDN'T BE *LUCKY* ENOUGH TO LOSE BOTH GUY GARDNER *AND* BOOSTER!

STRAP YOURSELF IN, JUSTICE LEAGUERS.

EARTH IS A *LONG* DISTANCE AWAY.

OH, MAN, THIS IS *GREAT!* I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET--

"--HOME!"

SO THIS IS IT. THIS IS WHERE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE HANGS ITS HAT.

NOBODY HERE NOW, BUT ONCE THEY RETURN--

--THINGS WILL GET *REAL* INTEREST-ING.

NEXT ISSUE:

★★★★★★

SUPERMAN VS. GUY GARDNER

★★★★★★

AND WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE WHO OUR MYSTERY GUEST IS!

TODAY'S THE DAY. BLASTED SENATE HEARINGS!

YOU SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE BASES COVERED, HARRIMAN?

YOU KIDDIN' ME, JUDGE KRAMER? YOU OUGHTA KNOW BY NOW THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY TO COVER YOUR BUTT--

WELL, IT HAD BETTER NOT GO WRONG TODAY! WE HAVE FAR TOO MUCH TO LOSE!

TELL ME ABOUT IT. IF MAJOR HOLCRAFT SINGS WE'LL ALL GO DOWN IN FLAMES.

--DURING A SPECIAL MISSION *ANYTHING* CAN GO WRONG!

EXACTLY. WE CAN'T LET THE SONS OF LIBERTY BE DENIED, JAY. WE CAN'T AFFORD IT--

--AND AMERICA CAN'T AFFORD IT.

DON'T WORRY. OUR MAN WILL COME THROUGH.

YOU'RE SURE ROSS WILL DO IT?

KILLING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS, JUDGE. CAN'T BE *SURE* OF ANYTHING!

WELL, HE'D *BETTER* DO IT! WHEN SUPERMAN ARRESTED HOLCRAFT THE *SONS* WERE NEARLY *DECIMATED!*

THOSE'RE THE BREAKS. HOLCRAFT KNEW IT GOIN' IN. LIKE I SAID, JUDGE--

A FEW OF US *MANAGED TO SURVIVE* TO CARRY ON THE HOPES AND DREAMS!

IT'S REGRETTABLE TO ELIMINATE A GOOD MAN LIKE HOLCRAFT BUT...

"-KILLING IS SERIOUS BUSINESS!"

EVERYBODY STEP BACK NOW! MAJOR HOLCRAFT IS TO BE GIVEN CLEAR PASSAGE!

NO PICTURES! NO PICTURES!

WHAT ARE ALL THESE PEOPLE DOING HERE? THIS IS A SENATE CHAMBER!

IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE SECURE!

Story - DAN JURGENS
guest pencils - PETE KRAUSE
guest inks - KEITH WILLIAMS
letters - JOHN COSTANZA
colors - GLENN WHITMORE
asst. editor - DAN THORSLAND
same old editor - MIKE CARLIN

SUPERMAN CREATED BY SIEGEL & SHUSTER

YOU PROMISED TO PROTECT ME IF I CONFESSED, SUPERMAN! THIS... *CHAOS*... IS HARDLY GOOD SECURITY!

RELAX, MAJOR HOLCRAFT! YOU JUST CONCENTRATE ON SPILLING THE BEANS ABOUT THE SONS OF LIBERTY!

LET *US* WORRY ABOUT GETTING YOU THE CHANCE! MOVE BACK, PEOPLE! THE MEDIA ARE TO STAY BEHIND THE *ROPES*!

SENATORS ONLY

WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT ON THESE HEARINGS, SENATOR RYEBURN?

HOLCRAFT HAS GOOD CAUSE TO BE WORRIED! WITH THE STORY HE HAS TO TELL THERE ARE SURELY MEN OUT THERE WHO'D WANT HIM DEAD!

HMM... X-RAY VISION CLEARS SENATOR RYEBURN!

LET'S SEE WHICH OF THE NATION'S SENATORS IS NEXT!

SUPERMAN?! WHAT'S *HE* DOING HERE?

OH, BROTHER! I'M DONE FOR--AND SO IS *LANA*!

PETE ROSS? I'VE KNOWN HIM LONG ENOUGH TO *KNOW* HE'S CLEAN!

PARDON ME, SUPERMAN!

ONE MOMENT, SENATOR CARRUTHERS! I HAVE TO TAKE A QUICK LOOK THROUGH YOUR BRIEF-CASE.

I *MADE* IT! DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I *MADE* IT!

ALMOST WISH I HADN'T, THOUGH! FROM HERE ON OUT, THINGS ARE ONLY GOING TO GET *WORSE*--

--'CAUSE I DON'T KNOW THAT I HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO *KILL* A MAN!

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT MAJOR HOLCRAFT IN, SUPERMAN! WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE HEARINGS TODAY?

ONLY THAT SENATOR GLADSTONE SHOULD GET IN SO THEY CAN GET UNDER WAY!

ER... AHH... CERTAINLY, SUPERMAN!

THAT'S IT! THE WHOLE COMMITTEE IS IN! LET'S SEAL THE DOORS!

CONSIDER IT DONE! EVEN THE SECRET SERVICE AGENTS IN THERE ARE UNARMED! WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT NOW!

HOW ABOUT THESE SONS OF LIBERTY, SUPERMAN?

"ARE THEY REALLY AS BAD AS PEOPLE SAY?"

--SWEAR TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, SO HELP ME GOD.

THANK YOU, MAJOR HOLCRAFT.

AS YOU KNOW, THESE COMMITTEE HEARINGS ARE BEING HELD TODAY TO DETERMINE YOUR ROLE IN TRYING TO ASSASSINATE QURAC'S PRESIDENT MARLO!*

*IN SUPERMAN #53.

NOW, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, YOU WERE LEADING A RADICAL POLITICAL GROUP CALLED...ER...AHH...

THE SONS OF LIBERTY.

ER...AHH... YES, THANK YOU, SENATOR ROSS.

TELL US ABOUT THIS GROUP OF YOURS, MAJOR.

OOO

HOW DID I GET INTO THIS? LANA KIDNAPPED BY THE SONS...

...AND IF I DON'T KILL HOLCRAFT WITH THE GUN THEY PLACED IN MY BRIEFCASE--

"--THOSE SLIME BUCKETS WILL KILL HER!"

WHAT IS ROSS WAITING FOR? HOLCRAFT HAS ALREADY STARTED GIVING HIS TESTIMONY!

HE'S SUFFERIN' AN ATTACK OF NERVES, JUDGE. NOTHING I DIDN'T EXPECT, REALLY.

C-SPAN

THAT'S WHY--

"--I MADE SURE TO SEND HIM A LITTLE REMINDER!"

I CAN'T DO IT! I CAN'T! NO MATTER WHOSE LIFE IS AT STAKE--

--I'M NOT A KILLER!

SENATOR ROSS?

SPECIAL COURIER DELIVERED THIS FOR YOU, JUST BEFORE WE STARTED, SIR. SAID IT'S URGENT, PERTAINING TO THESE HEARINGS!

THANK YOU, LISA.

COULD THIS--?

OH... GOD...! A LOCK OF LANA'S HAIR!

TELL ME, MAJOR. ARE THESE SONS OF LIBERTY STILL ACTIVE TODAY?

WHAT'LL I DO? WHAT WILL I DO?

INDEED THEY ARE, SENATOR!

I GIVE UP... BEFORE THE EYES OF THE NATION, BEFORE THE EYES OF GOD--

--I HAVE TO SHOOT MAJOR HOLCRAFT! I HAVE TO!

Mr. ROSS

NO! THIS IS NOT WHAT THESE HEARINGS ARE ABOUT!

FORGIVE ME, LANA... I CAN'T PERPETUATE THE SONS OF LIBERTY'S MADNESS! THE WORLD HAS TO KNOW JUST HOW AWFUL THOSE MEN ARE!

EXCUSE ME, I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT TO MAKE.

ROSS HAS LOST HIS NERVE! HE'S GOING TO SPILL HIS GUTS!

YOU WERE WRONG ABOUT HIM, HARRIMAN! HE'S FAILED US!

NO SIR. EVERY CONTINGENCY PLANNED FOR...

THAT'S WHY WE HAVE A BACK-UP IN THE CHAMBER. THAT'S WHY--

"--LOCKWOOD'S ON THE SCENE!"

OUT OF THE WAY, FARM BOY!

HEY!

YOU MESS WITH THE SONS OF LIBERTY, YOU LOSE!

OHMYGODHE'S GOTAGUN!

NOOO!

SORRY, MAJOR. BUT FOR YOUR "CHILD" TO LIVE... YOU HAVE TO DIE!

BAM!!!

ARRRGH!

BOOM!!!

GUNSHOTS!

SOUND THE ALARMS, SOLDIER!

I COULD WOUND A LOT OF PEOPLE TO GIVE SUPERMAN A DIVERSION--

--BUT THAT ISN'T MY STYLE! I'LL HAVE TO MAKE IT OUT OF HERE ON MY *OWN!*

BOAM

AND A LITTLE GUN FIRE ABOVE THEIR HEADS WILL KEEP PEOPLE OFF MY BACK!

SECURE THE AREA, MEN! THE ASSASSIN'S MINE!

YOU GOT IT, SUPERMAN!

SUPERMAN'S HERE ALREADY?! I'LL *NEVER* MAKE IT OUT OF HERE NOW!

GET THE PARAMEDICS IN HERE ON THE DOUBLE!

THAT ASSASSIN MIGHT START FIRING AT ME! EVERYBODY *DOWN!*

YOU *CAN'T* GO AFTER HIM, SUPERMAN! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GET MAJOR HOLCRAFT TO THE HOSPITAL BEFORE HE DIES!

GOOD POINT, SENATOR ROSS!

DETAIN SENATOR ROSS!

WE ALL SAW HIM *GIVE* THE WEAPON TO THE GUNMAN!

ROSS!?

YOU--YOU CAN'T BE *SERIOUS!*

FREEZE OR WE SHOOT!

THIS POCKET MIKE HAD BETTER WORK!

WHERE ARE YOU, SATELLITE?

I NEED EXTRACTION--

--AND I NEED IT NOW!

SORRY, SIR! WE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME COMING IN LOW TO AVOID RADAR!

CLIMB ABOARD AND WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF THIS FIRE ZONE PRONTO!

GO!

SPINGG

SPEUNWWW

SPTANNG

WHERE THE HECK IS SUPERMAN? LAST TIME I LOOKED--

"--HE WAS RIGHT ON MY TAIL!"

I COULD EASILY BRING THAT CHOPPER DOWN WITH A BURST OF HEAT VISION BUT THAT WOULD ONLY ENDANGER CIVILIANS ON THE GROUND!

IN FACT-- SOMETHING ABOUT IT SEEMS FAMILIAR! COULD IT BE--

UHNN... SUPERMAN?

HANG IN THERE, MAJOR! I'LL HAVE YOU AT THE HOSPITAL BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!

GOT... GOT TO TELL YOU... WHILE I STILL CAN...

TELL ME? TELL ME WHAT?

THE RATS WHO HIT ME... IT WAS THE SONS OF LIBERTY!

BUT I THOUGHT THE WHOLE ORGANIZATION WAS DISMANTLED WHEN I FIRST ARRESTED YOU!

NOT BY A LONG SHOT!

TELL ME WHO THEY ARE! TELL ME HOW TO SHUT THEM DOWN FOR GOOD!

THEY'RE A FEW... SURVIVORS FROM MY ORIGINAL ORGANIZATION! THEY WERE AFRAID I'D SING...

THEY EVEN HAD... AGENT LIBERTY HIMSELF... EXECUTE THE MISSION...

THAT BOY IS GOOD. REAL... GOOD.

... SO THEY HAD ME... HIT!

THEY EVEN KILLED SENATOR CALDWELL... WANTED TO GET... THEIR OWN BOY IN THE SENATE...

;UGH!; PAIN... GUT FEELS LIKE... LIKE...

GIVE ME NAMES, MAJOR... WHO'S BEHIND ALL THIS?

WHO?

MAJOR? MAJOR HOLCRAFT?

DAMN!

SECRET SERVICE ALERTED US TO YOUR ARRIVAL, SUPERMAN! WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE!

TOO LATE, DOCTOR. HE'S GONE.

I TRUST YOU'LL NOTIFY THE PROPER AUTHORITIES AND THE NEXT OF KIN.

I'LL BE BUSY ELSE-WHERE.

CAN'T BELIEVE IT WAS THE SONS OF LIBERTY WHO ASSASSINATED SENATOR CALDWELL! I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS QURACI PRESIDENT MARLO'S MEN!

AND I ASSUMED THAT PETE'S MOVE TO CALDWELL'S SENATE SEAT WAS STRICTLY ON THE UP-AND-UP!

WHAT IS PETE'S ROLE IN ALL THIS? IS HE CONNECTED TO MARLO, THE SONS OR *BOTH*?

WAS HE REALLY THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THE MURDER WEAPON INTO THE SENATE CHAMBER?

TWO FRIENDS--PETE ROSS AND AGENT LIBERTY--PART OF AN ASSASSINATION PLOT!

MY GOD, WHAT'S HAPPENING TO AMERICA?

METROPOLIS IS HURTING, MR. LUTHOR. REALLY *HURTING.*

FIRST WE WENT INTO AN ECONOMIC *FREE FALL* AS A RESULT OF YOUR FATHER'S DEATH AND THE SUBSEQUENT CHAOS IN LEXCORP.

AND BEFORE WE COULD RECOVER FROM THAT WE HAD THAT NASTY BUSINESS WITH WAR-WORLD!

CALL ME LEX, MAYOR BERKOWITZ!

AND BELIEVE ME, AS SOMEONE WHO'S DEALT WITH BOTH THOSE CALAMITIES CLOSE UP, I'M WELL AWARE O' YOUR PROBLEM!

THAT'S WHY I'M PUTTING TOGETHER A "*REBUILD METRP-OLIS*" COMMITTEE THAT I'M HOPING YOU'LL *CHAIR!*

SORRY, MATE, BUT MY SCHEDULE IS FULL UP WITH PULLING LEXCORP OUT OF A TAILSPIN!

YOU'LL 'AVE TO FIND SOME-ONE ELSE!

BUT WHO WILL I GET? NO ONE COMMANDS THE RESPECT *YOU* DO!

I HAVEN'T THE FOGGIEST IDEA.

YOU WERE THE PERFECT CHOICE, LEX, WITHOUT YOU--

-- I MIGHT AS WELL CANCEL MY PLANS FOR THE COMMITTEE!

IF YOU FEEL YOU MUST, THEN --*WAIT!* WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THIS BEFORE?

ARE YOU THINKING WHAT *I'M* THINKING?

HE'S PERFECT! STRONG, CIVIC-MINDED--

INDEED! I CAN'T BELIEVE WE OVERLOOKED--

--COLLIN THORNTON!

OPEN UP THE DOORS AND SECURE FOR LANDING. WE'RE COMING IN.

WE COPY THAT, SATELLITE.

EASY... EASY... LET'S SET THIS PRETTY LITTLE LADY DOWN REAL POLITE LIKE!

WE'VE RUN A RADAR SWEEP OF THE ENTIRE AREA. NO AIR TRAFFIC AT ALL. WE CAN ASSUME YOU WEREN'T FOLLOWED.

CONGRATULATIONS ON A SUCCESSFUL OP. RADIO SAYS HOLCRAFT DIED ON THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL.

CONGRATULATIONS? *CONGRATULATIONS?!*

HOW CAN YOU CONGRATULATE ME FOR *KILLING* A MAN, HARRIMAN?

EXTREME SOLUTIONS TO EXTREME PROBLEMS, REMEMBER? THAT'S WHAT THE *SONS* ARE ALL ABOUT!

BULL!

I DIDN'T SIGN UP WITH THIS OUTFIT TO BE PART OF SOME *ASSASSIN-ATION* CONSPIRACY!

DON'T START GOING SOFT ON ME, BOY! YOU *KNOW* WE'RE WORKING FOR A *GOAL*-- A RESTORATION OF *AMERICAN* VALUES!

I KNOW. THAT'S WHY I JOINED--

--BUT I DON'T THINK ASSASSINATING AN AMERICAN MAJOR IS THE WAY TO GO ABOUT IT!

AGENT LIBERTY STANDS FOR SOMETHING *BETTER!*

DON'T YOU GO PREACHING TO ME ABOUT VALUES, BOY! I KNOW ALL ABOUT THEM AND HOLCRAFT PROBABLY WROTE THE *BOOK!*

HE'S THE ONE WHO FIRST STARTED THE *SONS!* BUT HE LEFT THE ORGANIZATION IN A SHAMBLES WHEN HE TRIED TO HAVE MARLO HIT--

-- AND SCREWED UP! SUPERMAN CAUGHT HIM WITH HIS PANTS DOWN AND BUSTED HIM! NEARLY GOT US ALL TOO! *

*SUPERMAN #53.

NOW WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF HOLCRAFT GOT TO SING FOR THE SENATE?

IF THE SITUATION HAD BEEN REVERSED -- IF *YOU'D* BEEN IN HIS SHOES -- HE'D HAVE HAD *YOU* HIT, BENJY BOY!

REMEMBER THAT!

MAYBE SO. BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE IT RIGHT, DOES IT?

HELL, I'VE DONE A LOT OF DIRTY THINGS IN MY LIFE --

-- BUT I'VE NEVER FELT AS DIRTY AS I DO TODAY!

I'VE GOT WORK TO DO! IF YOU WANT TO STAY HERE AND CRY IN YOUR BEER THEN BE MY GUEST!

I WILL, HARRIMAN.

BELIEVE ME, I WILL.

BUT I'M TELLING YOU --

"--WE'RE GETTING DIRTIER EVERY DAY AND YOU DON'T EVEN SEE IT!"

THANK YOU FOR THAT LOCK OF HAIR, MS. LANG. OUR PLAN MIGHT NOT HAVE SUCCEEDED WITHOUT IT.

SO NOW YOU'LL LET ME GO, RIGHT?

CERTAINLY NOT!

I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE TO KEEP YOU HERE FOR... AH, PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

YOU SEE, AS LONG AS WE HAVE YOU WE ARE ASSURED OF YOUR HUSBAND'S SILENCE.

YOU...*SLIME!* YOU *FORCED* HIM TO KILL A MAN!

ACTUALLY, HE DID NO SUCH THING. BUT WE *DO* NEED HIM TO TAKE THE RAP FOR THE ASSASSINATION!

AND IF HE SHOULD SOMEHOW BE LINKED TO SENATOR CALDWELL'S ASSASSINATION AS WELL, THEN SO BE IT!

YOU? YOU KILLED *CALDWELL?*

OF COURSE. WE NEEDED SOMEONE WE COULD MORE EASILY CONTROL SUCH AS YOUR HUSBAND!

OUR PROBLEM NOW IS MAKING SURE HE STAYS SILENT. A PROBLEM WITH *ONE* SOLUTION!

NO! YOU'RE PLANNING TO *KILL* HIM!

WE DO ONLY WHAT WE MUST. GOODBYE, MS. LANG.

PETE, OH, PETE...

"-- HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO SURVIVE THIS?"

PARK

YOU, YOUNG LADY, HAVE MADE A *REMARKABLE* RECOVERY!

WHY, JUST A FEW DAYS AGO--

--YOU WERE IN *CRITICAL* CONDITION!

YEAH, I GUESS SO! WHEN THAT TERMINATOR GUY SHOT ME I DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER SEE ANY OF YOU AGAIN!

X-RAY

LAB

HOLD ON THERE! YOU'RE *NOT* LEAVING THIS HOSPITAL!

UNTIL I SIGN YOUR RELEASE PAPERS, THAT IS. CONGRATULATIONS, LUCY. I WISH *ALL* MY PATIENTS HAD YOUR RECUPERATIVE POWERS!

WHAT'D YOU EXPECT, DOC? SHE'S A *LANE!*

C'MON! LET'S GO HOME AND CELEBRATE!

UMM, I WAS THINKIN' ABOUT THAT.

IS IT OKAY WITH YOU FOLKS IF I GIVE LUCY A RIDE IN THE "OLSEN-MOBILE II"?

;HARUMPH!:

OH, JIMMY, I'D LOVE TO! DID YOU GET ANOTHER CAR ALREADY?

NOT EXACTLY. IT'S MY MOM'S.

I DON'T CARE *WHOSE* CAR IT IS! IF YOU'RE DRIVIN'--

--IT'S AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN!

AW, I'LL BE REAL CAREFUL, MR. LANE!

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THE ARMY, OLSEN? LEAST THEY'D MAKE A *MAN* OF YOU!

'BYE, DADDY! SEE YOU AT HOME!

DON'T LET DADDY GET TO YOU, JIMMY. DEEP DOWN I KNOW HE THINKS HIGHLY OF YOU.

I THINK "*DEEP DOWN*" DESCRIBES THE HOLE YOUR FATHER WOULD LIKE TO *BURY* ME IN!

METRO GENERAL

OH, JIMMY, I... I...

THAT SUN... SO BRIGHT...

YEAH, WE'VE RUN INTO A STRETCH OF GREAT WEATHER LATELY! MAYBE WE SHOULD GO OUT FOR A PICNIC TOMORROW.

WOOZY... OH...

LUCE! OH, MAN! WHAT'S WRONG?

HANG ON, BABE! I'LL GO SNARE A DOCTOR!

NO... THAT ISN'T NECESSARY. I THINK MY LEGS ARE JUST WEAK... FROM LYING AROUND SO MUCH...

I DUNNO, LUCE. I THINK YOUR DOCTOR SHOULD GIVE YOU THE ONCE OVER BEFORE--

NO! I JUST WANT TO GO HOME, OKAY?

OKAYYYY... BUT I'M GONNA BE WATCHIN' YOU!

SPEAKING OF WATCHING, I SAW YOU WITH THAT SINGER CALLED *BABE* THE OTHER DAY.

IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOU TWO, JIMMY?

ER... AH... THAT IS...

CALM *DOWN*, JIMMY! I MEAN--

"--DRIVING LIKE THIS WILL LAND YOU IN JAIL!"

NOW WHAT?

I'D LIKE TO TELL EVERYBODY WHY I'M HERE--THAT THE *SONS* FORCED ME TO BRING THAT GUN INTO THE SENATE CHAMBER!

BUT IF I SAY ANYTHING--*ANYTHING*--GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT THEY'LL DO TO *LANA!*

BUT I'M NOT DUMB. AS LONG AS I'M ALIVE I CAN POINT THE FINGER AT THEM! AND THE WAY THOSE GUYS OPERATE--

--WELL, "DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES!"

PETE?

WHO--?

SUPERMAN!

WHA-WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

I CAME TO HELP.

I CAME TO HEAR YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY.

NOW WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED BACK THERE?

WELL... I MEAN... I CAN'T... ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT.

IT WAS... IT WAS...

DON'T BE CRAZY, ROSS! LANA'S LIFE WON'T BE WORTH A PLUGGED NICKEL IF THESE GUYS FIND OUT YOU TALKED TO SUPERMAN!

FOR ALL I KNOW THEY HAVE THIS CELL *BUGGED!*

IT WAS HOLCRAFT! HE WAS A TRAITOR WHO *DESERVED* TO DIE!

LOOK, PETE! I *KNOW* YOUR WORK* AND I KNOW YOU'D NEVER BE A PART OF THIS!

YOU'RE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING DEEP HERE AND YOU HAVE TO LET ME HELP YOU!

NO! I DID IT! I DID IT ALONE!

*PETE ROSS AND SUPERMAN (NOT CLARK KENT) MET IN SUPERMAN #45

TALK TO ME, PETE! I KNOW THE SONS WERE IN ON THIS!

YOU-- *CAN'T* BE ONE OF THEM CAN YOU?

OKAY, SUPERMAN--

--YOU'LL HAVE TO LEAVE NOW. ROSS IS DUE TO APPEAR IN COURT!

PLEASE, JUST A FEW MORE MINUTES AND I CAN--

HEY, AIN'T MY CALL, MAN! JUDGE TELLS ME TO GET HIM TO COURT, I GET HIM TO COURT!

'SIDES, AIN'T LIKE HE'S INNOCENT! THE WHOLE *WORLD* SAW THE GUN COME OUTTA HIS BRIEFCASE!

THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR.

MAYBE SO, BUT YOU'RE LUCKY YOU EVEN GOT IN HERE! LOTS O' PEOPLE HAVE TRIED AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO GOT THE NOD SO FAR!

YOU DIDN'T EVEN LET *LANA LANG* IN?

HMM...LESSEE... NOPE. DON'T BELIEVE ANYONE WITH THAT NAME HAS EVEN *TRIED* TO GET IN!

ODD. I'D HAVE EXPECTED LANA TO BE HERE RIGHT AWAY! IS IT POSSIBLE SHE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT THIS?

THANKS FOR THE HELP.

HEY, I DIDN'T EVEN GET YOUR AUTOGRAPH FOR MY *KID!*

MAYBE NEXT TIME.

THIS JUST DOESN'T ADD UP! NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY--

--ASSASSIN-ATION PLOTS JUST AREN'T PETE ROSS'S STYLE!

I'VE KNOWN HIM *MY* WHOLE *LIFE!* WE GREW UP TOGETHER!

THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN I KNOW WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN ANY OF THIS --

"--AND THAT'S AGENT LIBERTY!"

WASHINGTON.

I USED TO SAY THIS WAS MY KIND OF TOWN. THE KIND OF TOWN THAT WOULD MAKE YOU PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN.

NOW I'M NOT SO SURE.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I TRY TO REMEMBER THAT I'M A SOLDIER FIGHTING THE DECLINE OF AMERICA--

--MY GUT TELLS ME THAT I MAY HAVE GONE TOO FAR TONIGHT.

THIS MORNING I WAS PART OF THE SOLUTION. NOW I'M WONDERING IF I'M NOT PART OF THE PROBLEM.

HARRIMAN TELLS ME THAT EVERYTHING WE'RE DOING IS FOR THE BEST.

NO CHOICE BUT TO BELIEVE HIM. HE'S ALWAYS BEEN STRAIGHT WITH ME.

FACT IS THERE'S A JOB THAT HAS TO BE DONE.

FACT IS, ORDERS ARE ORDERS.

MOVE IT, ROSS! THE JUDGE IS WAITING!

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S SAFE?

OH, IT'S SAFE ALL RIGHT.

WE GOT THIS PLACE LOCKED UP TIGHTER THAN A WITCH'S BROOM!

SURRE IT IS. EVERY SECOND I'M ALIVE JUST PROLONGS THE INEVITABLE! ONE WAY OR ANOTHER--

--THE *SONS* ARE GOING TO GET ME!

INTO THE COURTROOM, SON! AFTER ALL--

--WE'RE GOING BY THE *BOOK* ON THIS ONE! WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ANY LEGAL LOOPHOLE THAT YOU CAN WIGGLE THROUGH!

FOR ALL I KNOW, ANY ONE OF THESE GUYS-- HECK, *ALL* OF THEM--

-- ARE PART OF THAT WEIRDO ORGANIZATION!

OH, LANA, I'M SO SORRY I--I--

GOD, NO! NOT **YOU!**

WHAT'S WRONG, MR. ROSS? YOU THINK YOU'RE A LITTLE TOO GOOD TO APPEAR BEFORE--

--JUDGE KRAMER?

NOW, HAVE A SEAT AND PLEASE BE SILENT! YOU'LL BEHAVE IN *MY* COURTROOM, MISTER! AM I UNDERSTOOD?

NO! I WANT A CHANGE OF JUDGES! A CHANGE OF VENUE! A *LAWYER!*

SIT DOWN, MR. ROSS! I WILL HAVE ORDER IN THIS COURTROOM--

--OR YOU'LL FACE CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH YOU CAN SCARCELY IMAGINE!

HOLD STILL, ROSS.

NO SENSE MAKING THIS ANY MESSIER THAN IT HAS TO BE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! ONE OF THE *SONS* IS ACTUALLY GOING TO RUN THIS *HEARING!* NO DOUBT ABOUT IT--

--*I'M A DEAD MAN!*

Continued in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #492!

WASHINGTON D.C., JUST PAST MIDNIGHT.

MORT--GIVE ME SOME LIGHT, AND ROLL THE VIDEO TAPE-- SUPERMAN'S COME OUT OF THE COURTHOUSE!

SUPERMAN-- OVER HERE.

CAN YOU GIVE US ANYTHING?

OVER HERE.

ALL RIGHT, ONE QUESTION.

WALTER HAINES, GBS-- MAJOR HOLCRAFT DIED BECAUSE PETER ROSS SMUGGLED A GUN INTO THE SENATE CHAMBERS.

YOU WERE CHECKING EVERYONE FOR WEAPONS-- HOW'D SENATOR ROSS GET ONE PAST YOU?

PETE IS ONE OF MY OLDEST FRIENDS FROM SMALLVILLE, AND SOMEONE I'D NEVER EXPECT TO DECEIVE ME.

BUT I CAN'T TELL THEM THAT.

SORRY, FOLKS. I SCREWED UP.

I CAN'T SAY ANY MORE UNTIL I FINISH MY INVESTIGATION, WHICH, BY THE WAY, I MUST CONTINUE NOW.

WAIT!

YOU FLEW MAJOR HOLCRAFT TO THE HOSPITAL--

--DID HE TELL YOU ANYTHING BEFORE HE DIED?

GBS

WELL, SUPERMAN HAS LEFT WITHOUT TELLING US MUCH MORE THAN WE ALREADY KNEW.

FOR VIEWERS JUST TUNING IN, LET'S BRIEFLY RECAP THE EVENTS OF THIS DRAMATIC DAY!

UNDER TIGHT SECURITY, MAJOR HOLCRAFT, REPUTED HEAD OF THE TERRORIST GROUP "SONS OF LIBERTY," BEGAN HIS TESTIMONY.

FRESHMAN SENATOR PETER ROSS OF KANSAS, SITTING IN PLACE OF THE LATE SENATOR CALDWELL--

--HAD APPARENTLY SMUGGLED A GUN INTO THE PROCEEDINGS.

THAT WEAPON WAS USED BY A MAN POSING AS A SECRET SERVICE AGENT, POSSIBLY IN COLLUSION WITH ROSS--

--WHO THEN MORTALLY WOUNDED HOLCRAFT, AND ESCAPED, DEFTLY ELUDING AUTHORITIES.

THE ASSASSIN IS STILL AT LARGE.

SENATOR ROSS HAS BEEN ESCORTED BY CAPITOL POLICE TO THE COURTHOUSE, WHERE HE IS BEING ARRAIGNED.*

* THESE EVENTS COURTESY SUPERMAN #69

"...AND JUSTICE FOR ALL!"

PETE KRAUSE - PENCILLER
KEITH WILLIAMS - INKER
JERRY ORDWAY - WRITER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
ALBERT DE GUZMAN - LETTERER
DAN THORSLAND - ASSOC. EDITOR
MIKE CARLIN - SUPREME JUROR

SUPERMAN CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER

ISN'T THIS A COINCIDENCE!

IN THE *COURTROOM* OF JUDGE RONALD KRAMER, YOU WILL REFRAIN FROM ANY MORE OUTBURSTS, SENATOR ROSS!

YOU FACE *SERIOUS* CHARGES HERE, MISTER!

GREAT! I'M *DONE* FOR--JUDGE KRAMER IS *MORE* RESPONSIBLE FOR HOLCRAFT'S DEATH THAN I AM--!

AS PART OF THE "SONS OF LIBERTY," HE *ORDERED* THE SHOOTING, AND IF I SAY A *WORD* ABOUT IT, LANA LANG WILL *DIE*!

MY CLIENT IS *DISTRAUGHT*, YOUR HONOR.

MY ONLY HOPE IS TO KEEP QUIET, AND MAYBE THEY'LL *RELEASE* HER! DEAR GOD, IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HER...

YOUR HONOR, SINCE MR. ROSS HAS REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH OUR INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF MAJOR HOLCRAFT--

--THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE HAS NO RECOURSE BUT TO FILE CHARGES AGAINST HIM FOR AIDING AND ABETTING A *MURDER*.

HOW WILL THE DEFENDANT PLEAD, COUNSELOR?

NOT GUILTY, YOUR HONOR...

HOW'S IT FEEL, SWIMMING WITH PIRANHAS, ROSS?

A BUMPKIN LIKE YOU WOULD *NEVER'VE* PULLED THE TRIGGER ON HOLCRAFT!

THE "SONS" SENT ME AS BACK-UP, TO MAKE SURE THE MAJOR DIDN'T NAME NAMES-- AND NOW I'M SUPPOSED TO *NAIL* YOU TOO.

HOLCRAFT *TALKED*, AND HE *KNEW* THE CONSEQUENCES, BUT *YOU*, ROSS--NOT A *PEEP*! WHAT'S KRAMER HOLDING OVER YOU?

AND *WHY* DO I SUDDENLY FEEL LIKE A *HIRED ASSASSIN*?

WHAT ARE YOU AND HARRIMAN TURNING THE SONS OF LIBERTY *INTO*, JUDGE?

ON THE MATTER OF BAIL, YOUR HONOR, THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY RECOMMENDS IT BE SET AT THREE MILLION DOLLARS.

THREE MILLION IS LUDICROUS, YOUR HONOR. MR. ROSS IS A UNITED STATES SENATOR--NOT SOME COMMON CRIMINAL.

YOUR HONOR?

WHERE IN HELL ARE YOU, AGENT LIBERTY? I PURPOSELY REQUESTED THE COURTROOM CLEARED FOR THESE PROCEEDINGS.

YOU HAD A CLEAR SHOT AT ROSS--WHY DIDN'T YOU TAKE IT? ARE YOU GOING TO BE A PROBLEM FOR US NOW, TOO?

ON THE MATTER OF BAIL...?

BAIL IS SET AT THREE MILLION.

WHILE WAITING FOR BAIL TO BE ARRANGED, THE SENATOR WILL BE REMANDED TO THE WAKEFIELD FACILITY.

THE TOMBS?

WE ARE ADJOURNED, PEOPLE.

NOW IT'S UP TO HARRIMAN TO ARRANGE ROSS'S END.

YOUR HONOR, THE TOMBS ARE FULL OF THE WORST RIFF-RAFF! SENATOR ROSS--

--IS UP ON SERIOUS CHARGES, COUNSELOR.

HE HAS NO PREVIOUS RECORD, YOUR HONOR.

REGARDLESS, COUNSELOR, A NIGHT IN THE "TOMBS" SHOULD MAKE MR. ROSS REFLECT ON WHAT HE HAS DONE.

"PETE ROSS IS NO CRIMINAL."

I KNOW IN MY HEART HE WAS EITHER TRICKED OR FORCED INTO BRINGING THAT WEAPON INTO THE SENATE.

I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHY...

...EVEN IF IT MEANS SEARCHING HIS APARTMENT!

HOW CONNECTED IS PETE TO THE SONS OF LIBERTY? IS LANA INVOLVED AS WELL, OR IS SHE BEING USED SOMEHOW?

I'D BETTER BE CAREFUL NOT TO TOUCH ANYTHING, OR I COULD SCREW UP THE POLICE INVESTIGATION. I'LL USE MY X-RAY VISION.

HMM--AN UN-CASHED CHECK FROM A LOBBY GROUP--THE LIBERTY FOUNDATION? AND WHAT'S THIS LETTER?

LIBERTY GRANT FOUNDATION

Pay to the order of Peter Ross

Twenty thous

1:0930300.

Dear Ms. Land, Welcome to our office. Your first day of work

LANA'S WORKING FOR JUDGE KRAMER? SOMETHING'S FISHY ABOUT THIS--EH?

SORRY TO ROUST YOU OUT OF BED, MISTER.

WE'VE GOT A WARRANT TO SEARCH PETER ROSS'S PLACE.

UH, RIGHT THIS WAY, OFFICERS.

WE'LL TRY NOT TO WAKE UP ANY OF THE OTHER TENANTS, MAC.

COULD YOU CLOSE THE WINDOW WHEN YOU'RE DONE, OFFICERS?

WELL, THAT WAS A CLOSE CALL!

AT LEAST I FOUND OUT SOMETHING--THAT PETE NEVER CASHED THAT CHECK FROM THE "LOBBY" GROUP--

--AND LANA'S WORKING FOR THE JUDGE WHO WAS PRESIDING OVER PETE'S ARRAIGNMENT!

I ALSO SEE THAT I'VE GOT COMPANY.

HO-LY--! SUPERMAN--WHERE'D YOU COME FROM?

PLANNING TO RIFLE THROUGH PETER ROSS'S APARTMENT, AGENT LIBERTY?

WHAT'S HIS CONNECTION TO HOLCRAFT'S KILLING?

HOLD IT, "FRIEND." I ASKED A QUESTION!

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO MIX IT UP WITH YOU--I JUST WANTED SOME DOPE ON ROSS, LIKE YOU DID!

:YEARGH!:

SHWING

SHWING

WE FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE AGAINST AN ALIEN INVASION*--YOU OWE ME AN ANSWER!

NOT HERE AND NOT NOW--!

DAMN!

KLSSHH

*IN OUR "PANIC IN THE SKY" STORY LINES.

MAJOR HOLCRAFT SAID *YOU* SHOT HIM-- AND HE SAID THAT ROSS'S SENATE APPOINTMENT WAS *FIXED* BY *YOUR* BOYS!

-URK- HOLCRAFT WAS A *WEAK-KNEED JERK* WHO THREATENED *OUR CAUSE*--

--BUT WE DIDN'T *PLAN* ON THE QURACIS KILLING SENATOR CALDWELL!

SUPES IS PLAYING *HARDBALL* HERE--I'M GOING TO GET HURT.

MAGNETIC SHIELDS SHOULD PUT A *LITTLE* DISTANCE BETWEEN ME AND A CRUSHED WINDPIPE!

NOT SO *FAST*, LIBERTY!

HOLCRAFT, IN HIS DYING BREATH, MENTIONED *NOTHING* ABOUT QURAC--HE SAID THE SONS OF *LIBERTY* HAD CALDWELL *HIT*!

HE WAS PRETTY *CONVINCING*!

NO WAY HARRIMAN AND KRAMER WOULD HAVE *ME* CHECK OUT THE BOMBSITE IF *THEY'D* DONE IT-- OR *WOULD* THEY?

SATELLITE, ARE YOU WATCHING? CODE *RED*!

WHAT ARE YOU--!

"*CAMERA'S WORKING, AGENT.*"

LIBERTY NEEDS ONE *HECK* OF A *DIVERSION* TO GET AWAY FROM THE MAN OF STEEL!

THIS IS SATELLITE?

UH-HUH!

HAPPY TO SEE US, AGENT LIBERTY?

SHIELDS UP, AGENT!

GIVE HIM HELL, BOYS!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA

THE GAME'S OVER, BOYS--YOU CAN'T EXPECT TO BEAT ME WITH THOSE WEAPONS?

NOW'S THE TIME TO VAMOOSE--I'VE GOT SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO CLEAN UP!

YOU'RE NOT OUR TARGET, SUPERMAN--THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT IS!

"WHAT KIND OF GAME IS AGENT LIBERTY PLAYING, HARRIMAN? HAS HE GONE COMPLETELY CRAZY?"

BEN LOCKWOOD IS NOT CRAZY, JUDGE! HE PULLED OUR BUTTS OUT OF THE FIRE WHEN ROSS CHOKED IN THAT SENATE CHAMBER!

THERE MUST BE A GOOD REASON HE DIDN'T DROP THE SENATOR RIGHT THERE IN YOUR COURTROOM!

I'VE GOT A TRACER OUT ON HIM NOW, BUT EITHER WAY--

PETE ROSS WON'T LIVE TO SEE THE SUN RISE.

I SENT HIM TO THE "TOMBS," SO WE SHOULDN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE GETTING TO HIM THERE. KEEP ME POSTED!

DAMN YOU, LOCKWOOD!

I'M GOING OUT, SOLDIER, SO LOCK THIS COMPOUND UP TIGHTER THAN YOUR GRANNIE'S KNICKERS!

OH, AND SON-- IF AGENT LIBERTY DROPS IN, DON'T ASSUME HE'S A "FRIENDLY."

WHAT ABOUT OUR "GUEST?"

DO NOTHING 'TIL YOU HEAR FROM ME.

NOW, I'VE GOT TO PAY SENATOR ROSS A VISIT.

PETE! HE'S STILL ALIVE-- FOR NOW AT LEAST!

HOW IN GOD'S NAME DID WE LET OURSELVES GET DRAWN INTO THIS NIGHTMARE?

AGENT LIBERTY'S PALS GAMBLED CORRECTLY THAT I WOUDN'T LET ANY *HARM* BEFALL ANY OF THESE MONUMENTS.

THE *LAST* MISSILE THEY LAUNCHED HAS TARGETED THE *LINCOLN MEMORIAL*.

POOR "HONEST ABE" HAS ALREADY SUFFERED THE INDIGNITY OF BEING *TRANSMOGRIFIED* INTO A KRYPTONIAN IDOL.*

GOT IT!

NOW TO FLY THESE BABIES *UP*, PAST THE *IONOSPHERE*, WHERE THEIR DETONATION WILL DO LITTLE HARM!

BOOM

*BY THE ERADICATOR. WAY BACK IN ADVENTURES #480!

KA-BOOM!

SCRATCH THREE MISSILES-- AND ONE MORE CAPE!

THAT COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN MORE THAN *THREE* MINUTES...*MAX!* SO NOW THAT I'M BACK AT THE SCENE OF OUR ENCOUNTER...

...LET'S JUST *SEE* HOW WARM AGENT LIBERTY'S *TRAIL* IS!

FIRST, I'LL FOCUS MY *INFRA-RED VISION* TO SEARCH FOR ANY RESIDUAL *HEAT IMAGES* FROM LIBERTY AND HIS 'COPTER.

GOT IT.

NOW ALL I NEED TO DO IS *FOLLOW* IT RIGHT BACK TO THEM.

WITH ANY LUCK, THEY MAY LEAD ME DIRECTLY TO THEIR *HEADQUARTERS!*

SINCE LIBERTY'S HEAT TRAIL ISN'T IN EVIDENCE, I'LL ASSUME HE *HITCHED* A RIDE WITH HIS BUDDIES!

"SANCHEZ TOLD ME THAT HARRIMAN WENT OUT ON A FIELD MISSION."

HE'S PLANNING TO TIE UP A *LOOSE END*-- A.K.A., PETER ROSS!

MY ORIGINAL *ORDERS* WERE THAT IF I WAS *UNABLE TO HIT* ROSS IN THAT *COURTROOM*...

...HE'D BE PLACED *DOWN THERE*, IN THE "TOMBS," WHERE WE'D HAVE *ANOTHER* CHANCE TO DO HIM IN LATER.

LOOKS LIKE I GOT DOWN TO STREET LEVEL JUST IN TIME!

THAT'S A *GOVERNMENT-ISSUE SEDAN* PULLING UP TO THE *JAIL'S* ENTRANCE!

TWO "*SUITS*" ESCORTING A *VAGRANT* TO LOCK-UP? I *NEED* A *CLOSER* LOOK!

:PSST: HEY, *OFFICER*!

SOMEBODY *SAY* SOMETHING? THAT *YOU*, MULDOON?

DON'T BE PLAYIN' JOKES ON ME-- MULDOON?

I'LL MAKE SURE YOU *GET* THE *PUNCHLINE*, PAL.

WHAT IN THE WORLD EVER POSSESSED ME TO BRING THAT WEAPON INTO THE SENATE CHAMBER?

OR WORSE YET-- AGREE TO KILL A MAN FOR THE SONS OF LIBERTY?

LIKE ME OR NOT, NO ONE IN SMALLVILLE COULD EVER IMAGINE PETE ROSS BEING CHARGED AS AN ACCESSORY TO MURDER!

I DID WHAT I DID TO SAVE LANA, BUT NOW I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING IF SHE'S EVEN STILL ALIVE!

MOVE ALONG, PALLY-- THIS AIN'T NO HOTEL, AND I AIN'T NO BELLBOY!

DON'T EVEN ASK, ROSS-- YOUR LAWYER DIDN'T CALL!

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO TALK WIT' ONE OF OUR DETECTIVES, WOULD YOU?

NOT WITHOUT MY ATTORNEY!

G'NIGHT, BOYOS!

WATCHIT, BUB!

ZZZZZZ

YOU!

WE'RE GLAD YOU HAVEN'T TALKED, ROSS.

IS LANA OKAY, HARRIMAN?

-GASP-

WHAT COULD THAT MATTER-- TO A DEAD MAN?

BLAM

:URK:

HARRIMAN!

YOU-- SAVED ME--HE HAD A KNIFE...

COME CLOSE TO THE BARS, ROSS. DO IT!

AND YOU GO BACK TO SLEEP, GOT IT?

I DINT SEE NUTHIN'!

LISTEN UP--WHEN YOU DO TELL YOUR STORY-- THAT GUN WAS PLANTED IN YOUR BRIEFCASE-- GOT IT?

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO USED THE GUN TO SHOOT MAJOR HOLCRAFT! I RECOGNIZE--

WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES? WHO FIRED THAT SHOT?

I DID! THAT VAGRANT PULLED A SHIV ON THE SENATOR!

IT'S NOT SAFE IN HERE!

HE-- HE'S DEAD.

STAND AWAY FROM HIM! WHY DIDN'T SOMEONE PAT THIS VAGRANT DOWN BEFORE HE WAS LOCKED UP?

SAY-- WHERE'S THE COP WHO SHOT THIS JOHN DOE?

HE'S ON HIS WAY TO FINISH THE JOB HE STARTED HERE...

"...NAMELY, ENDING HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THE SONS OF LIBERTY!"

SATELLITE TO HOME BASE-- WE'VE COME TO ROOST. OPEN THE BAY.

UH-OH! WE'VE GOT COMPANY.

RR BA..A NNK

NO, YOU'VE GOT TROUBLE--BIG TROUBLE!

NOTHING CAN MOVE THAT FAST!

WE'RE COMING IN FOR A LANDING, FELLAS!

YOUR LITTLE DIVERSION WITH THE AREA'S MONUMENT ONLY MADE ME ANGRY.

FIRST THINGS FIRST--WHERE IS AGENT LIBERTY? HE HAS A LOT TO ANSWER FOR!

TALK, OR I'LL--

I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY...

WELL?

LIBERTY ISN'T THE GUY YOU'VE GOT A *BEEF* WITH--HE'S JUST *FOLLOWING ORDERS*, LIKE WE ARE!

THAT'S ALL I'M SAYING!

THAT'S *NOT* ENOUGH!

HOLY--! HOW AM I GOING TO KEEP SUPERMAN OUT OF HERE?

AN X-RAY VISION SCAN REVEALED ENOUGH ANOMALIES TO MERIT INVESTIGATING THIS FARMHOUSE!

I DON'T SUPPOSE I'D FIND VERY MANY OTHER BARNS IN VIRGINIA WITH *HELIPADS* BUILT INSIDE OF THEM.

ALARM TRIP-WIRES AND OTHER BOOBY TRAPS MAY STOP THE *AVERAGE* INTRUDER...

"...BUT IT'LL TAKE MORE THAN THAT TO STOP ME!"

WHUD!

THAT DIDN'T SOUND RIGHT!

I'D BETTER GRAB THE GIRL TO USE AS A HUMAN SHIELD.

RISE AND SHINE...

...MARY SUN-SHINE!

YOU TRYING TO OVERCOMPENSATE FOR SOMETHING WITH THAT GUN OF YOURS, FELLA?

NOT TOO TOUGH NOW. ARE YOU, SPARKY?

WHY DO YOU MORONS BOTHER SHOOTING YOUR POPGUNS AT ME?

YOU STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF HURTING YOURSELF WITH A RICOCHET!

:ULP: SO-- FAST...!

GOTTA WARN THE BRASS!

ALARM

DAMN! SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG AT THE FARMHOUSE!

I'VE GOT TO CHECK IN WITH HARRIMAN.

ANOTHER ONE WORKING THE WEE HOURS, EH, JUDGE KRAMER?

JUSTICE NEVER SLEEPS, MR. KAMINSKY!

YOU!

WHY DIDN'T YOU TERMINATE ROSS LIKE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO?

JUDGMENT CALL, KRAMER!

I HAD HIM FRAMED IN MY PISTOL SCOPE, ALL READY TO PULL THE TRIGGER...

...WHEN IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT THE WRONG GUY WAS IN THE CROSSHAIRS!

I'M OUT, JUDGE.

I WARNED HARRIMAN ABOUT YOU, AGENT, BUT HE DIDN'T LISTEN!

HE'S AT THE "TOMBS" RIGHT NOW RECTIFYING YOUR MISTAKE WITH THE SENATOR!

BY NOW, HARRIMAN'S IN THE MORGUE, WITH A TAG ON HIS TOE.

YOU LOST ME WHEN YOU MURDERED SENATOR CALDWELL, JUDGE.

I WASN'T ABOUT TO LET ANOTHER SENATOR DIE!

CALDWELL?

SO THIS IS ABOUT CALDWELL?

YOU KNOW WE PLAY HARDBALL--WHAT DID YOU THINK THIS ORGANIZATION WAS FOR, AGENT? GIVING OUT PARKING TICKETS?

I'M THE JUDGE, HARRIMAN WAS THE JURY, AND YOU WERE OUR EXECUTIONER!

CLIC CLIC CLIC

THINK I'D LEAVE A LOADED GUN LYING AROUND?

IF YOU WANT ME DEAD, YOU'LL HAVE TO WORK FOR IT!

:URK:

NO MORE GETTING OTHERS TO DO YOUR DIRTY WORK, KRAMER!

THE "SONS OF LIBERTY" ARE DONE FOREVER!

...THE "SONS OF LIBERTY" ARE DONE FOREVER!

I'LL HAVE TO DELETE THAT LAST PART OF THE TAPE...

...BUT IT, ALONG WITH KRAMER'S FILES...

"...SHOULD HELP ROSS OUT OF HIS JAM!"

WHAT'S YOUR CONNECTION TO THE DEAD MAN, ROSS? CAN YOU IDENTIFY HIS KILLER?

I REFUSE TO ANSWER ANYTHING WITHOUT MY ATTORNEY PRESENT, DETECTIVE!

ROSS'S LAWYER'S HERE--AND SHE'S NOT ALONE!

LANA, WAIT--

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SUPERMAN. DON'T BEGRUDGE THE SENATOR A HUG... ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT HE'S BEEN THROUGH.

OH, PETE!

LANA! YOU'RE SAFE!

MR. ROSS HAS POSTED BAIL!

I'LL BE WAITING OUTSIDE.

"A NEW DAY BRINGS A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE WHIRLWIND OF EVENTS THAT LED TO MY INCARCERATION YESTERDAY.

"I EXPECT TODAY, MY FELLOW SENATORS WILL VOTE TO CENSURE ME BECAUSE OF WHAT I'VE DONE.

"FOLKS, MY FIANCÉE HERE MEANS MORE TO ME THAN MY APPOINTMENT TO THE SENATE."

SOME MEN WHO WANTED MAJOR HOLCRAFT SILENCED, KIDNAPPED MS. LANG IN ORDER TO FORCE ME TO HELP THEM.

I WAS WRONG TO SMUGGLE THAT WEAPON INTO SEALED CHAMBERS, AND THE MAJOR'S DEATH WILL HAUNT ME 'TIL MY DYING DAY.

THIS WOMAN'S LIFE, AND HER LOVE, MEAN MORE TO ME THAN ANYTHING ELSE-- INCLUDING MY SERVICE IN GOVERNMENT.

WITH LANA BESIDE ME, I HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FACE THE CHARGES BEFORE ME.

MISS LANG- HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE WITH SOMEONE WITH SUCH DEVOTION?

"WONDERFUL. I'VE WAITED A LIFETIME FOR SOMEONE LIKE HIM."

TO: CLARK KENT DAILY PLANET METROPOLIS

FED LE

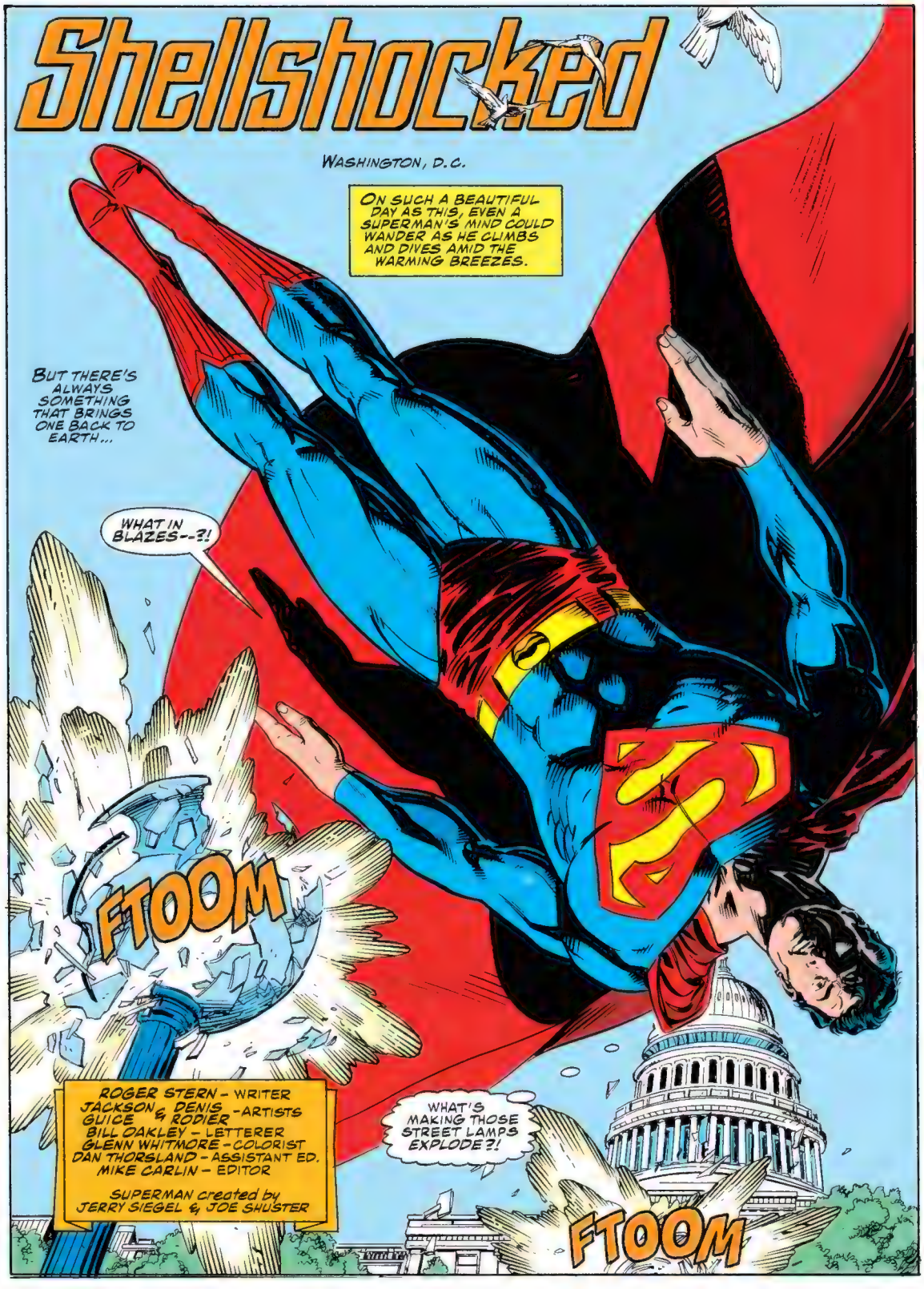
THERE IT IS-- ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO BLOW THE LID OFF THE SONS OF LIBERTY.

FED LEX

AND AFTER THE GUTS HE DISPLAYED IN BREAKING INTERGANG, CLARK KENT'S JUST THE MAN TO WRITE THE EXPOSÉ...

...MINUS BENJAMIN LOCKWOOD'S PARTICIPATION, OF COURSE!

THE END.

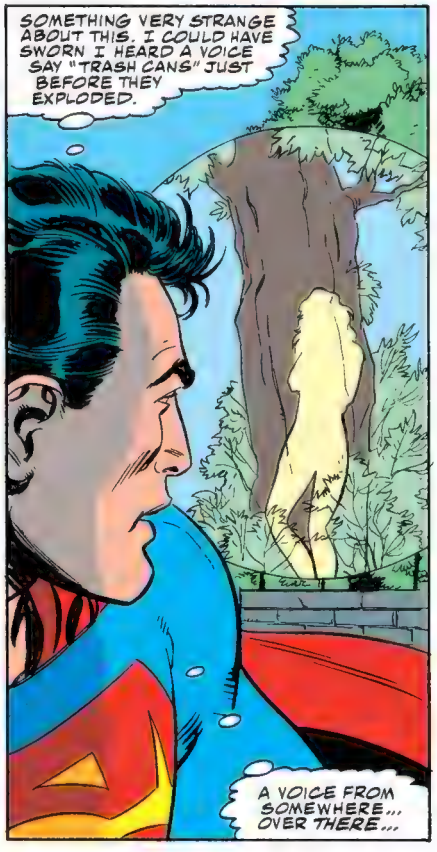

Shellshocked
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ON SUCH A BEAUTIFUL DAY AS THIS, EVEN A SUPERMAN'S MIND COULD WANDER AS HE CLIMBS AND DIVES AMID THE WARMING BREEZES.
BUT THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT BRINGS ONE BACK TO EARTH...
WHAT IN BLAZES--?!
FTOOM
ROGER STERN - WRITER
JACKSON & DENIS GUICE & RODIER - ARTISTS
BILL OAKLEY - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST
DAN THORSLAND - ASSISTANT ED.
MIKE CARLIN - EDITOR
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
WHAT'S MAKING THOSE STREET LAMPS EXPLODE?!
FTOOM

A SUDDEN, MASSIVE POWER SURGE?
NO, THOSE LAMPS WEREN'T EVEN LIT. AND WHATEVER MADE THEM BLOW VIRTUALLY ATOMIZED THE GLOBES.
SUPERMAN!

WHAT'S GOING ON?! THE LIGHTS--ALL ALONG THE WEST SIDE OF THE CAPITOL--JUST... JUST BLEW UP!
HERE, NOW! LET'S NOT GO GETTING PARANOID! THERE MAY BE A PERFECTLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION...
IS THIS SOME TERRORIST ATTACK? THOSE SONS OF LIBERTY NAZIS THAT YOU STOPPED*--WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T GET ALL OF THEM?!
WELL...
* IN ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #492, STILL ON SALE.

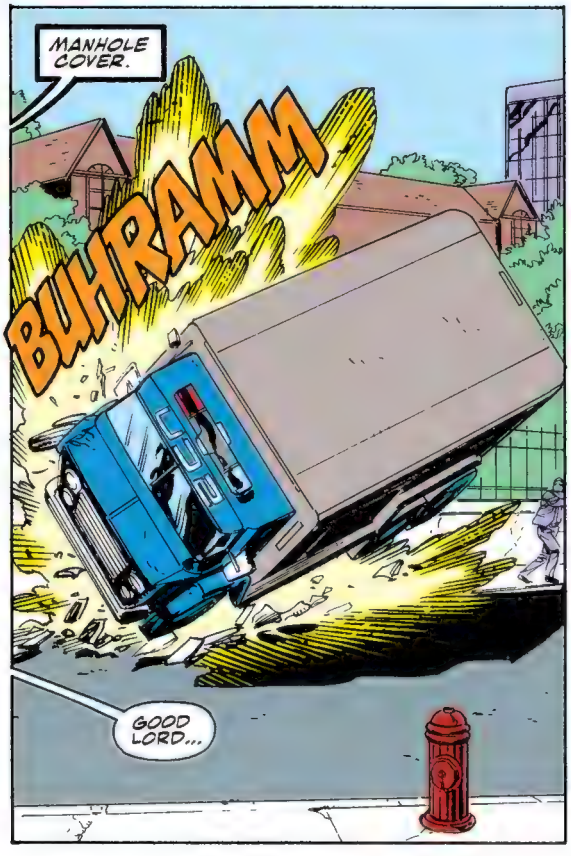
...LOOKING FOR LOGIC, ARE YOU? TRY TO FIGURE OUT THIS ONE...
TRASH CANS.

WHU--?
OGOD, THEY'VE BOOBY-TRAPPED THE TRASH RECEPTACLES, TOO!
BTOOM

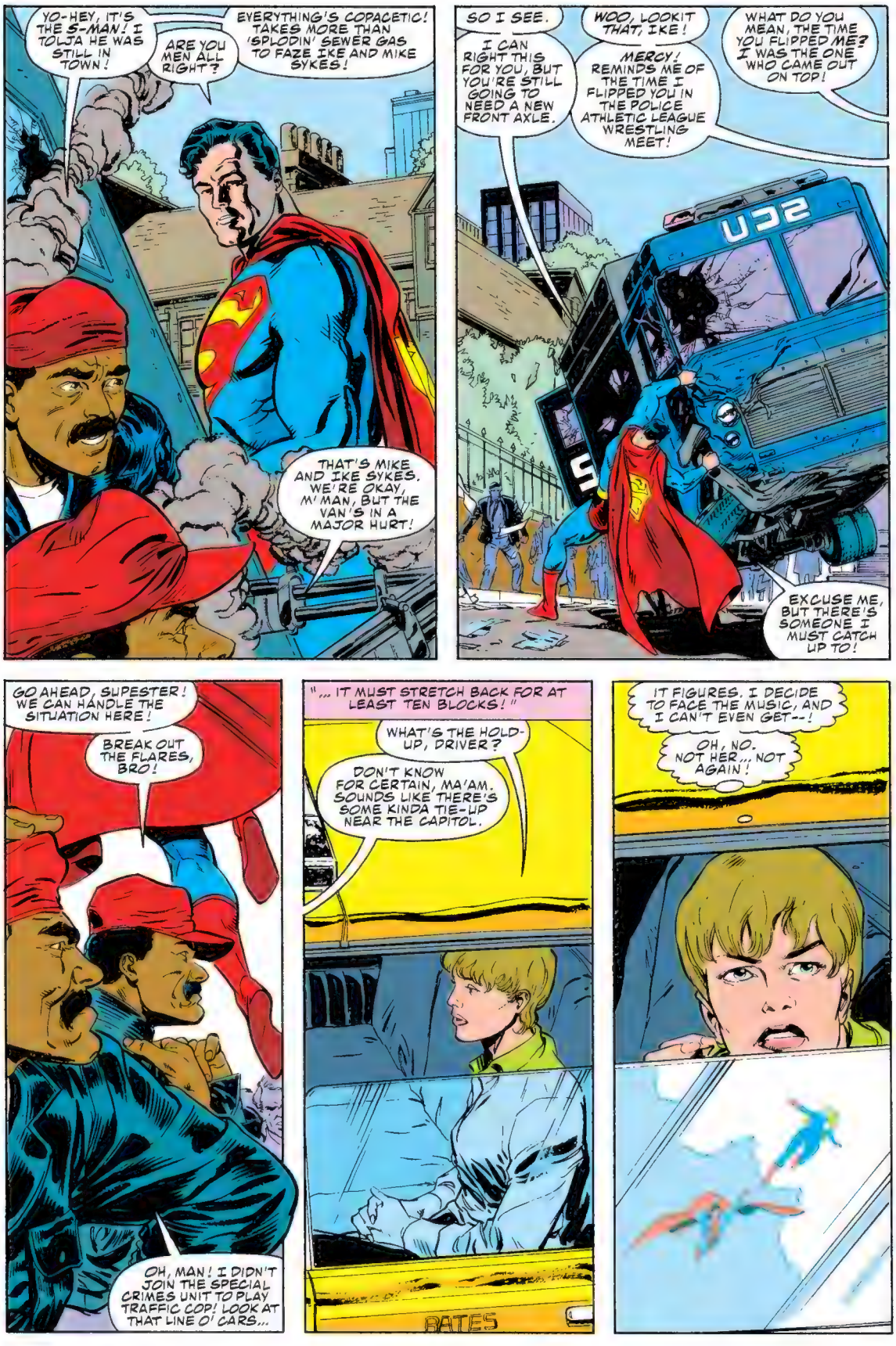

SOMETHING VERY STRANGE ABOUT THIS. I COULD HAVE SWORN I HEARD A VOICE SAY "TRASH CANS" JUST BEFORE THEY EXPLODED.
A VOICE FROM SOMEWHERE... OVER THERE...

"... BEHIND THOSE TREES!"
SO GLAD... THE ROAD... BROUGHT ME BACK... TO WASHINGTON.
THE PERFECT LOCALE FOR MYSTERY AND MAYHEM.
AND NONE CAN SOLVE MY MYSTERY... NOT EVEN THE MIGHTY MAN OF...

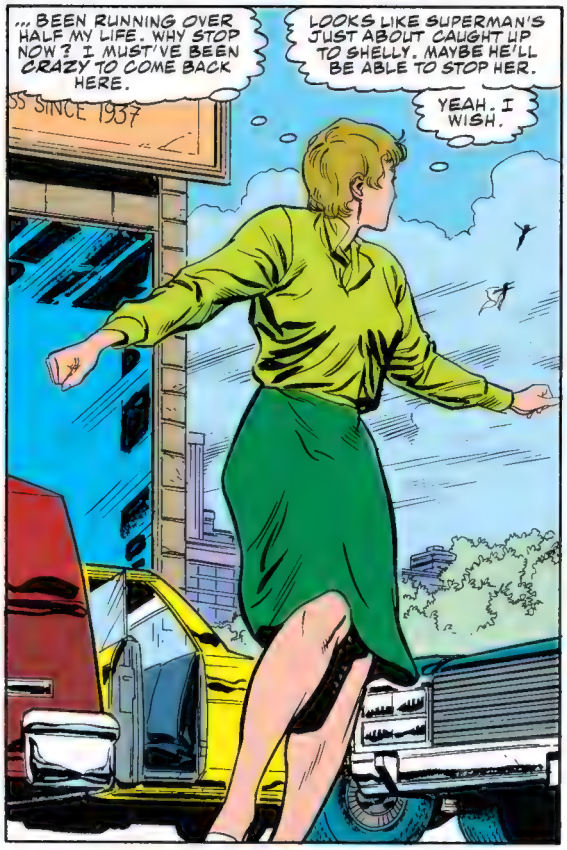
... STEEL?
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT!
A TREE DOESN'T PROVIDE MUCH OF A HIDING PLACE FROM A MAN WITH X-RAY VISION AND SUPER-HEARING.
NOW SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!


MANHOLE COVER.
BUHRAMM
GOOD LORD...

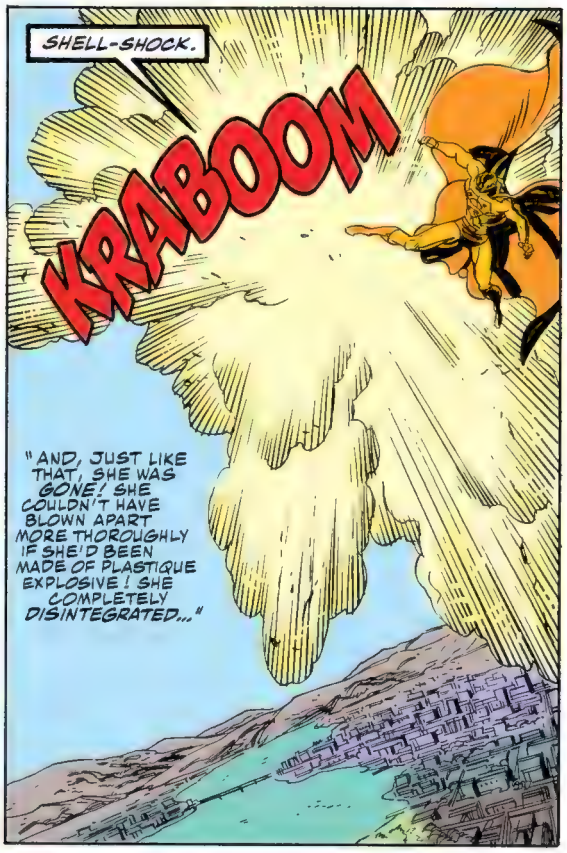
... THE FORCE OF THE EXPLOSION BLEW THAT POLICE VAN RIGHT OVER!
WILL YOU LET... INNOCENTS DIE?
NO... I WON'T.
BUT I'LL CATCH UP TO YOU LATER, LADY!

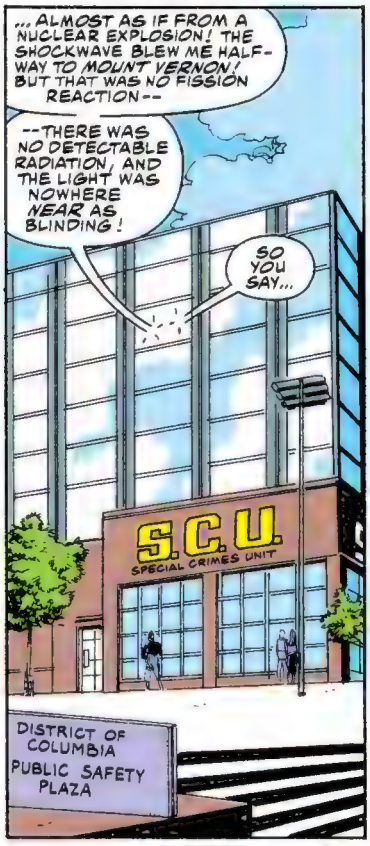

YO-HEY, IT'S THE S-MAN! I TOLJA HE WAS STILL IN TOWN!
ARE YOU MEN ALL RIGHT?
EVERYTHING'S COPACETIC! TAKES MORE THAN 'SPLODIN' SEWER GAS TO FAZE IKE AND MIKE SYKES!
THAT'S MIKE AND IKE SYKES. WE'RE OKAY, M'MAN, BUT THE VAN'S IN A MAJOR HURT!
SO I SEE.
I CAN RIGHT THIS FOR YOU, BUT YOU'RE STILL GOING TO NEED A NEW FRONT AXLE.
WOO, LOOKIT THAT, IKE!
MERCY! REMINDS ME OF THE TIME I FLIPPED YOU IN THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE WRESTLING MEET!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE TIME YOU FLIPPED ME? I WAS THE ONE WHO CAME OUT ON TOP!
EXCUSE ME, BUT THERE'S SOMEONE I MUST CATCH UP TO!
GO AHEAD, SUPESTER! WE CAN HANDLE THE SITUATION HERE!
BREAK OUT THE FLARES, BRO!
OH, MAN! I DIDN'T JOIN THE SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT TO PLAY TRAFFIC COP! LOOK AT THAT LINE O' CARS...
"... IT MUST STRETCH BACK FOR AT LEAST TEN BLOCKS!"
WHAT'S THE HOLD-UP, DRIVER?
DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN, MA'AM. SOUNDS LIKE THERE'S SOME KINDA TIE-UP NEAR THE CAPITOL.
BATES
IT FIGURES. I DECIDE TO FACE THE MUSIC, AND I CAN'T EVEN GET--!
OH, NO. NOT HER... NOT AGAIN!

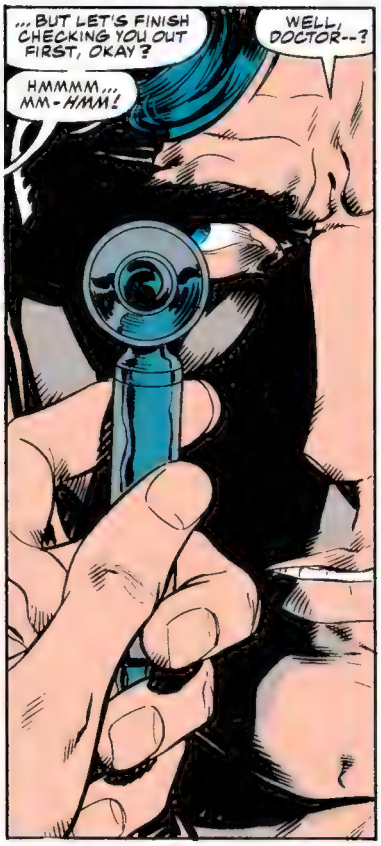
YOU SAY SOMETHING, MA'AM?
YES... NO! I MEAN... UH, I'LL GET OUT HERE!
YOU SURE YOU WANNA DO THAT? THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE IS AN AWFULLY LONG WALK--!
A LITTLE DISTANCE DOESN'T BOTHER ME. I'M A RUNNER...


...BEEN RUNNING OVER HALF MY LIFE. WHY STOP NOW? I MUST'VE BEEN CRAZY TO COME BACK HERE.
LOOKS LIKE SUPERMAN'S JUST ABOUT CAUGHT UP TO SHELLY. MAYBE HE'LL BE ABLE TO STOP HER.
YEAH. I WISH.

NO ONE CAN STOP ME, SUPERMAN... NOT EVEN YOU!
I BEG TO DIFFER. MAYBE YOU CAN FLY, BUT YOU CAN'T OUT-PACE ME!
YOU MIGHT AS WELL TELL ME WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!
MY CAUSE IS JUST. I AM...

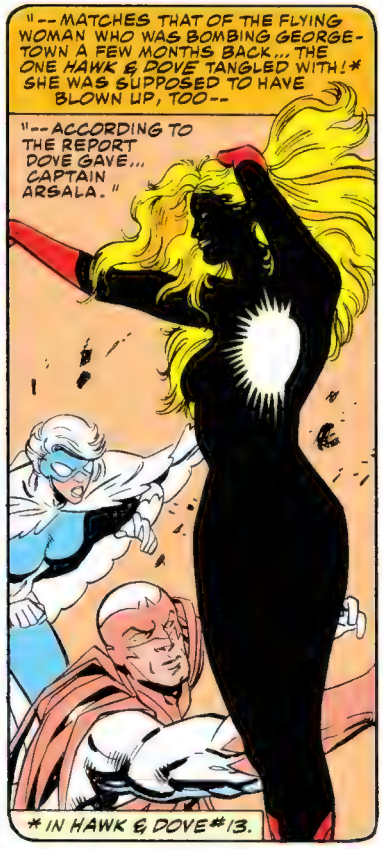

SHELL-SHOCK.
KRABOOM
"AND, JUST LIKE THAT, SHE WAS GONE! SHE COULDN'T HAVE BLOWN APART MORE THOROUGHLY IF SHE'D BEEN MADE OF PLASTIQUE EXPLOSIVE! SHE COMPLETELY DISINTEGRATED..."

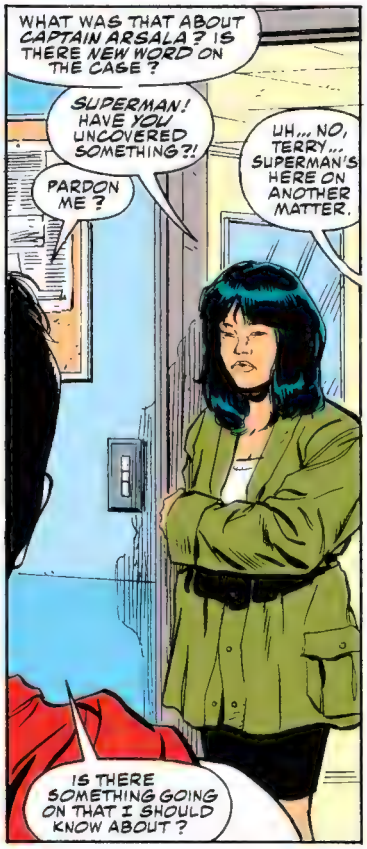

...ALMOST AS IF FROM A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION! THE SHOCKWAVE BLEW ME HALFWAY TO MOUNT VERNON! BUT THAT WAS NO FISSION REACTION--
--THERE WAS NO DETECTABLE RADIATION, AND THE LIGHT WAS NOWHERE NEAR AS BLINDING!
SO YOU SAY...
S.C.U.
SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SAFETY PLAZA

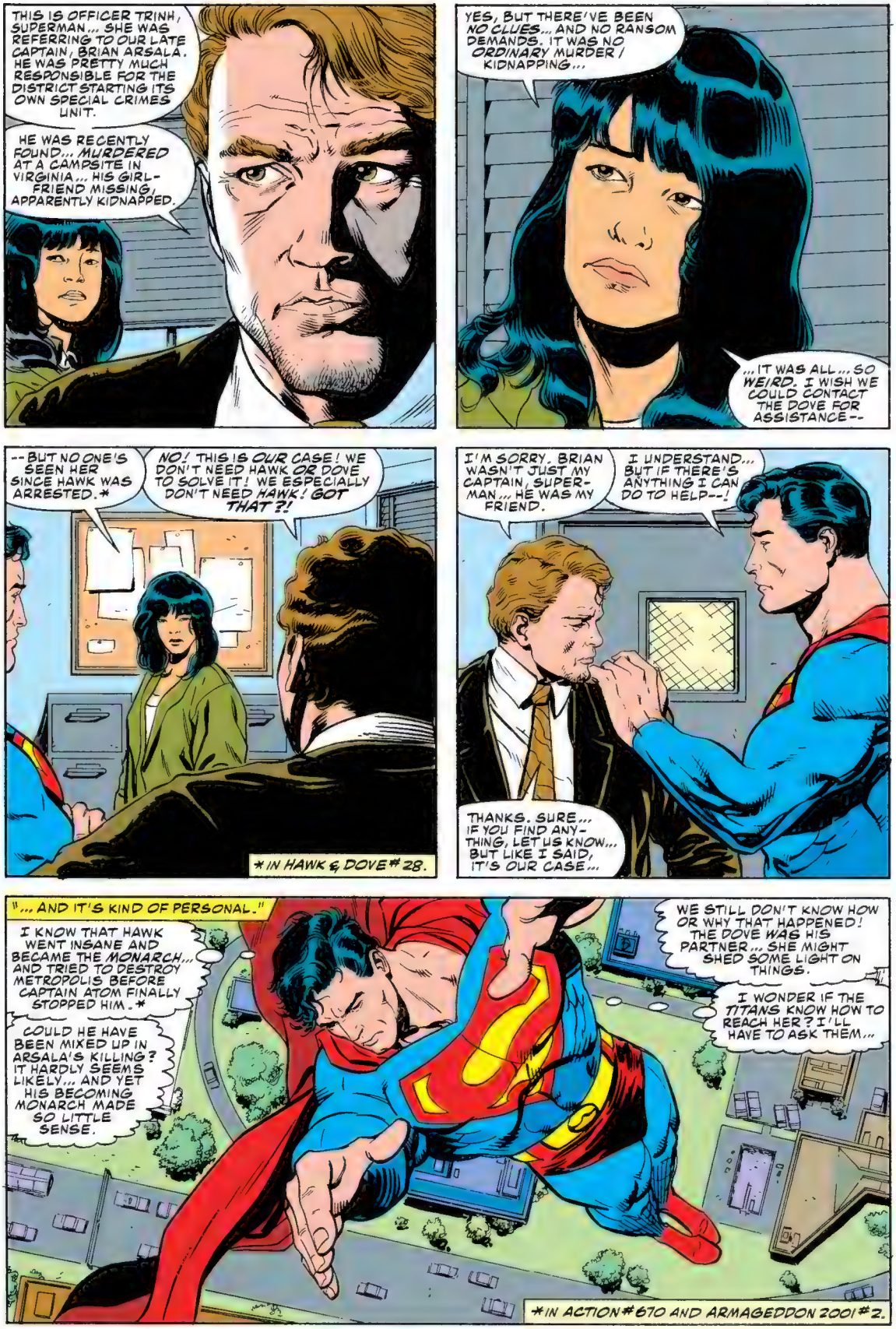

...BUT LET'S FINISH CHECKING YOU OUT FIRST, OKAY?
WELL, DOCTOR--?
HMMMM... MM-HMM!

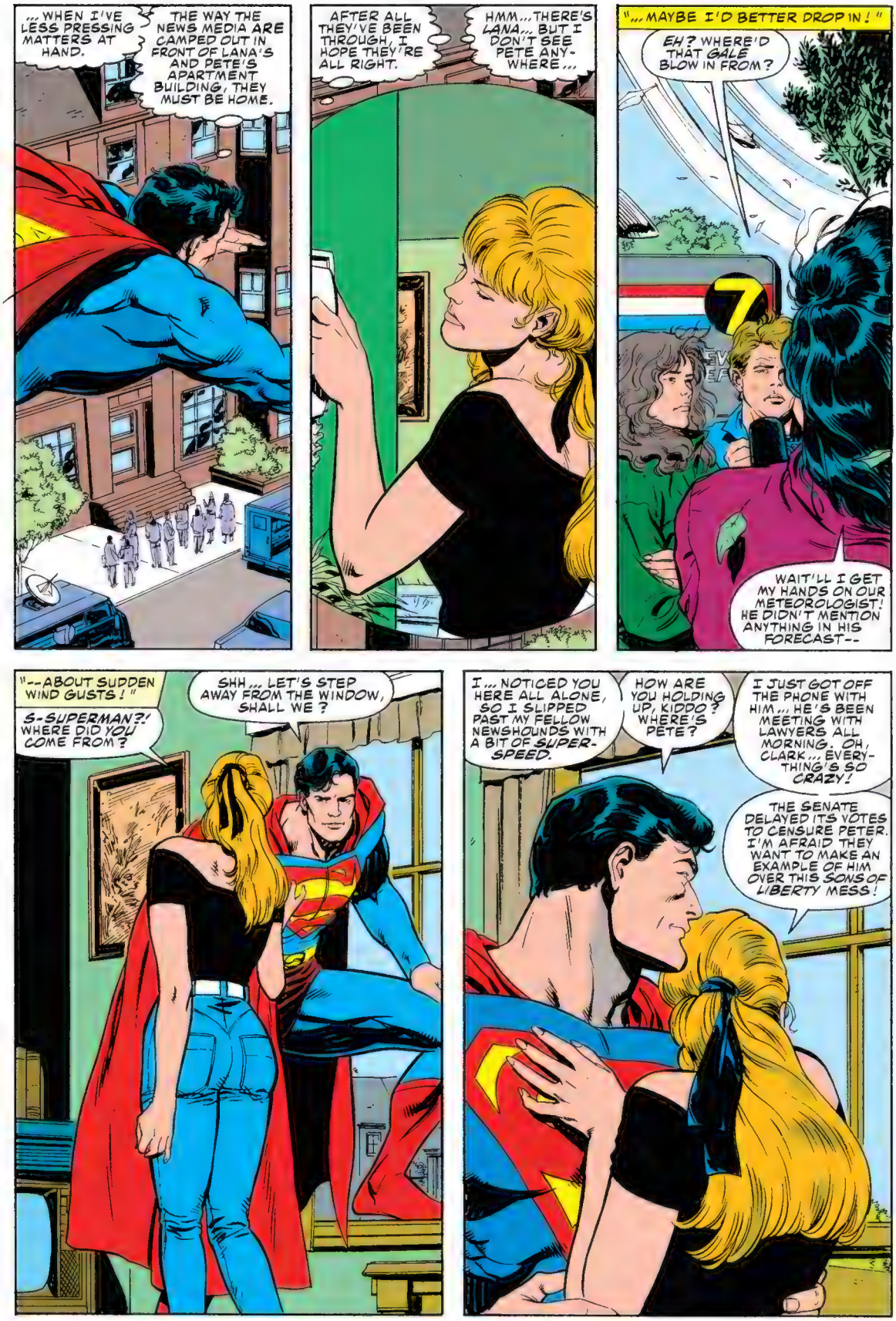
THERE'RE NO ILL EFFECTS THAT I CAN SEE. IN FACT, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE IN SUCH EXCELLENT PHYSICAL CONDITION!
THANKS, DEB.
I GUESS WE CAN DISCOUNT ANY NORMAL EXPLOSIVES THEN, SUPERMAN--?
ABSOLUTELY, LT. WOLFSON...

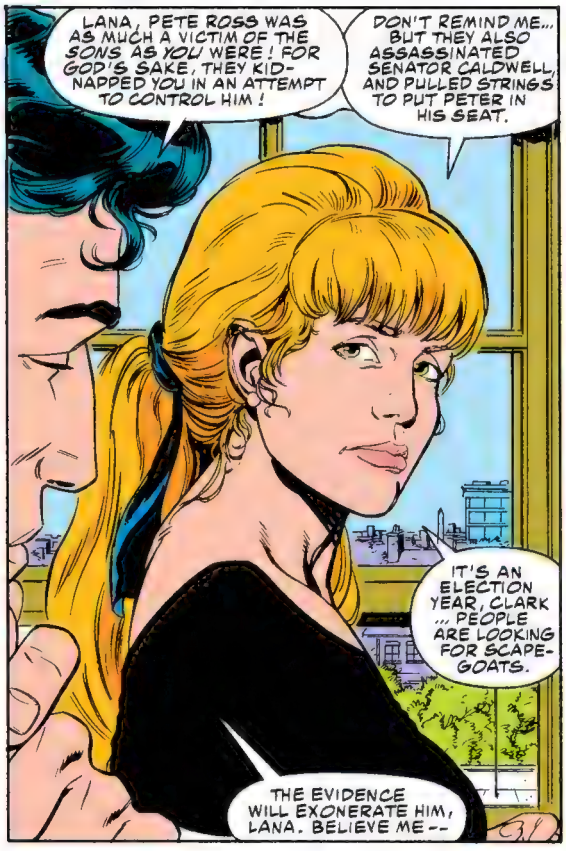
...I WENT OVER THE WRECKAGE OF THE STREET LAMPS AND THE TRASH CANS-- MICROSCOPICALLY-- AND THERE WASN'T EVEN THE MINUTEST AMOUNT OF ANY KNOWN EXPLOSIVE COMPOUND!
'COURSE THERE WASN'T! WE'RE OBVIOUSLY DEALING WITH A META-HUMAN!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, IKE! THE PERP'S DESCRIPTION--


"--MATCHES THAT OF THE FLYING WOMAN WHO WAS BOMBING GEORGETOWN A FEW MONTHS BACK... THE ONE HAWK & DOVE TANGLED WITH!* SHE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BLOWN UP, TOO--
"--ACCORDING TO THE REPORT DOVE GAVE... CAPTAIN ARSALA."
* IN HAWK & DOVE #13.

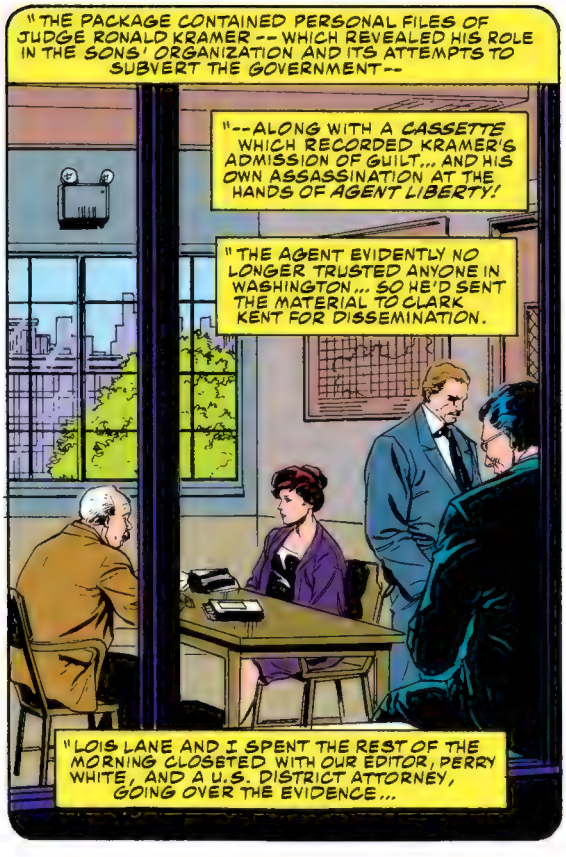

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT CAPTAIN ARSALA? IS THERE NEW WORD ON THE CASE?
SUPERMAN! HAVE YOU UNCOVERED SOMETHING?!
PARDON ME?
UH... NO, TERRY... SUPERMAN'S HERE ON ANOTHER MATTER.
IS THERE SOMETHING GOING ON THAT I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

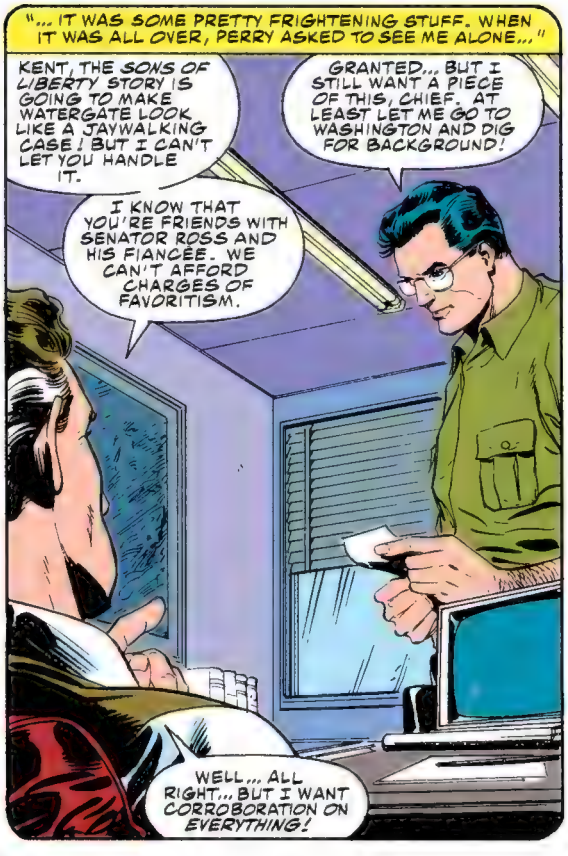

THIS IS OFFICER TRINH, SUPERMAN... SHE WAS REFERRING TO OUR LATE CAPTAIN, BRIAN ARSALA. HE WAS PRETTY MUCH RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISTRICT STARTING ITS OWN SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT.
HE WAS RECENTLY FOUND... MURDERED AT A CAMPSITE IN VIRGINIA... HIS GIRL-FRIEND MISSING, APPARENTLY KIDNAPPED.
YES, BUT THERE'VE BEEN NO CLUES... AND NO RANSOM DEMANDS. IT WAS NO ORDINARY MURDER / KIDNAPPING...
...IT WAS ALL... SO WEIRD. I WISH WE COULD CONTACT THE DOVE FOR ASSISTANCE--
--BUT NO ONE'S SEEN HER SINCE HAWK WAS ARRESTED.*
NO! THIS IS OUR CASE! WE DON'T NEED HAWK OR DOVE TO SOLVE IT! WE ESPECIALLY DON'T NEED HAWK! GOT THAT?!
* IN HAWK & DOVE # 28.
I'M SORRY. BRIAN WASN'T JUST MY CAPTAIN, SUPERMAN... HE WAS MY FRIEND.
I UNDERSTAND... BUT IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP--!
THANKS. SURE... IF YOU FIND ANYTHING, LET US KNOW... BUT LIKE I SAID, IT'S OUR CASE...
"... AND IT'S KIND OF PERSONAL."
I KNOW THAT HAWK WENT INSANE AND BECAME THE MONARCH... AND TRIED TO DESTROY METROPOLIS BEFORE CAPTAIN ATOM FINALLY STOPPED HIM.*
COULD HE HAVE BEEN MIXED UP IN ARSALA'S KILLING? IT HARDLY SEEMS LIKELY... AND YET HIS BECOMING MONARCH MADE SO LITTLE SENSE.
WE STILL DON'T KNOW HOW OR WHY THAT HAPPENED! THE DOVE WAS HIS PARTNER... SHE MIGHT SHED SOME LIGHT ON THINGS.
I WONDER IF THE TITANS KNOW HOW TO REACH HER? I'LL HAVE TO ASK THEM...
* IN ACTION # 670 AND ARMAGEDDON 2001 # 2.


...WHEN I'VE LESS PRESSING MATTERS AT HAND.
THE WAY THE NEWS MEDIA ARE CAMPED OUT IN FRONT OF LANA'S AND PETE'S APARTMENT BUILDING, THEY MUST BE HOME.
AFTER ALL THEY'VE BEEN THROUGH, I HOPE THEY'RE ALL RIGHT.
HMM... THERE'S LANA... BUT I DON'T SEE PETE ANY-WHERE...
"...MAYBE I'D BETTER DROP IN!"
EH? WHERE'D THAT GALE BLOW IN FROM?
WAIT'LL I GET MY HANDS ON OUR METEOROLOGIST! HE DIDN'T MENTION ANYTHING IN HIS FORECAST--
"--ABOUT SUDDEN WIND GUSTS!"
S-SUPERMAN?! WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
SHH... LET'S STEP AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, SHALL WE?
I... NOTICED YOU HERE ALL ALONE, SO I SLIPPED PAST MY FELLOW NEWSHOUNDS WITH A BIT OF SUPER-SPEED.
HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP, KIDDO? WHERE'S PETE?
I JUST GOT OFF THE PHONE WITH HIM... HE'S BEEN MEETING WITH LAWYERS ALL MORNING. OH, CLARK... EVERY-THING'S SO CRAZY!
THE SENATE DELAYED ITS VOTES TO CENSURE PETER. I'M AFRAID THEY WANT TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF HIM OVER THIS SONS OF LIBERTY MESS!

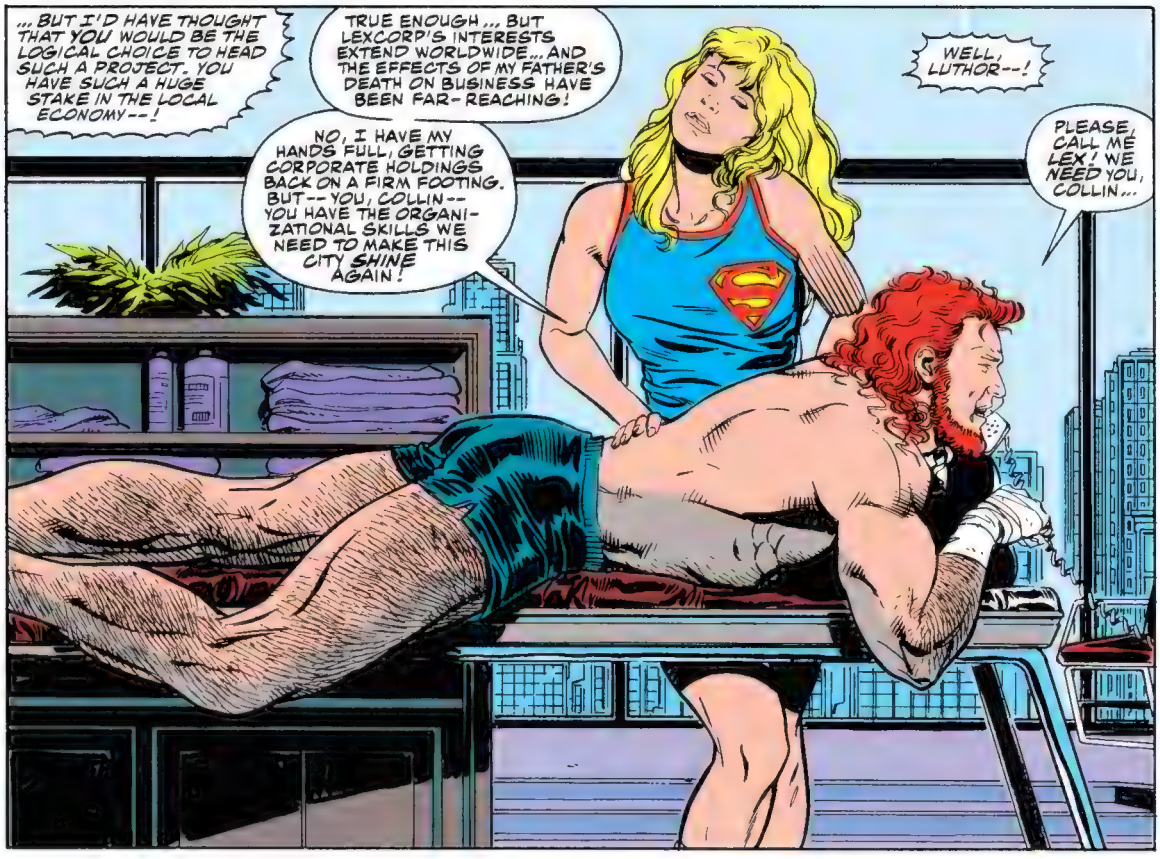

LANA, PETE ROSS WAS AS MUCH A VICTIM OF THE SONS AS YOU WERE! FOR GOD'S SAKE, THEY KIDNAPPED YOU IN AN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL HIM!
DON'T REMIND ME... BUT THEY ALSO ASSASSINATED SENATOR CALDWELL, AND PULLED STRINGS TO PUT PETER IN HIS SEAT.
IT'S AN ELECTION YEAR, CLARK ... PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS.
THE EVIDENCE WILL EXONERATE HIM, LANA. BELIEVE ME--

"--I'VE SEEN IT FOR MYSELF! EARLY THIS MORNING, I RECEIVED A COURIER PACKAGE AT THE DAILY PLANET..."
WHAT IS IT, CLARK?
I'M NOT CERTAIN, LOIS... BUT IT APPEARS TO BE INCRIMINATING DATA ON THE SONS OF LIBERTY!
SIDE #1
EXTREMELY URGE
RECIPIENT - PLEA

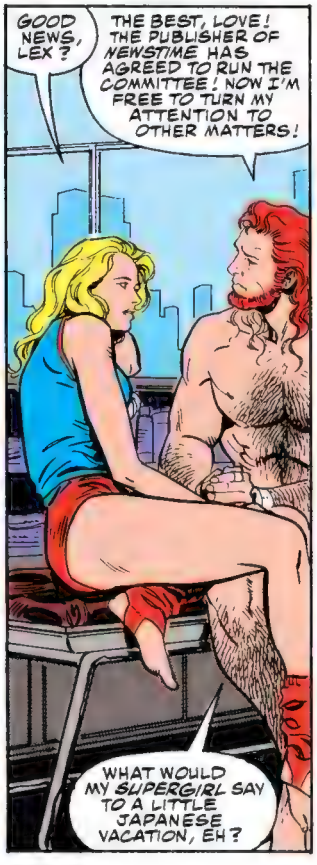

"THE PACKAGE CONTAINED PERSONAL FILES OF JUDGE RONALD KRAMER--WHICH REVEALED HIS ROLE IN THE SONS' ORGANIZATION AND ITS ATTEMPTS TO SUBVERT THE GOVERNMENT--
"--ALONG WITH A CASSETTE WHICH RECORDED KRAMER'S ADMISSION OF GUILT... AND HIS OWN ASSASSINATION AT THE HANDS OF AGENT LIBERTY!
"THE AGENT EVIDENTLY NO LONGER TRUSTED ANYONE IN WASHINGTON... SO HE'D SENT THE MATERIAL TO CLARK KENT FOR DISSEMINATION.
"LOIS LANE AND I SPENT THE REST OF THE MORNING CLOSETED WITH OUR EDITOR, PERRY WHITE, AND A U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY, GOING OVER THE EVIDENCE...

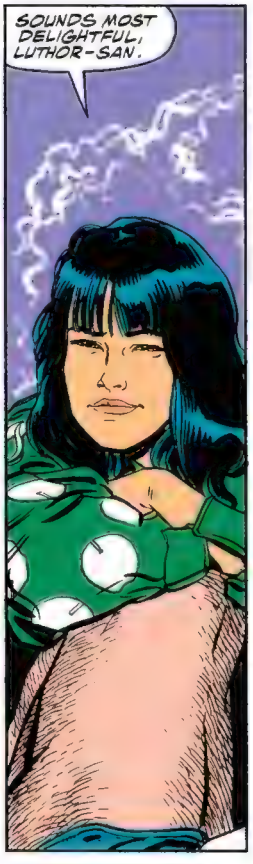

"... IT WAS SOME PRETTY FRIGHTENING STUFF. WHEN IT WAS ALL OVER, PERRY ASKED TO SEE ME ALONE..."
KENT, THE SONS OF LIBERTY STORY IS GOING TO MAKE WATERGATE LOOK LIKE A JAYWALKING CASE! BUT I CAN'T LET YOU HANDLE IT.
GRANTED... BUT I STILL WANT A PIECE OF THIS, CHIEF. AT LEAST LET ME GO TO WASHINGTON AND DIG FOR BACKGROUND!
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE FRIENDS WITH SENATOR ROSS AND HIS FIANCÉE. WE CAN'T AFFORD CHARGES OF FAVORITISM.
WELL... ALL RIGHT... BUT I WANT CORROBORATION ON EVERYTHING!

THANK YOU, CLARK. I FEEL BETTER KNOWING THAT PETER WON'T FACE INDICTMENT AS A CO-CONSPIRATOR.
IF ONLY THIS COULD HAVE COME OUT IN TIME TO SAVE POOR SENATOR CALDWELL. PETER REALLY ADMIRED HIM.
I UNDERSTAND THAT HE'D BECOME PETER'S POLITICAL MENTOR.
UH-HUH...
...HE WAS GROOMING PETER AS A POSSIBLE SUCCESSOR. BUT NOW... IN JUST A LITTLE WHILE... PETER'S GOING TO BE PILLORIED ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE.
WELL, HE WON'T FACE THAT ALONE! I'M GOING TO BE THERE FOR HIM.
I JUST WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO WADE THROUGH THAT MOB OF REPORTERS.
DON'T GIVE THAT ANOTHER THOUGHT!
I'LL GET YOU PAST THEM... I GUARANTEE THAT THEY'LL NEVER EVEN SEE YOU!
CLARK... NO! STOP! I CAN'T GO TO THE HILL DRESSED LIKE THIS! GIVE ME A MOMENT TO CHANGE...
"...THEN WE CAN FLY!"
OH, THAT WIND! IT WASN'T THIS BAD IN MARCH! WHERE IS IT COMING FROM?!
BEATS ME! I HAVEN'T SEEN GUSTS LIKE THIS SINCE MY INTERNSHIP...
"...IN METROPOLIS."
COULD YOU CONNECT ME WITH MR. LUTHOR, PLEASE... THIS IS COLLIN THORNTON CALLING...
COLLIN! GOOD TO HEAR FROM YOU! DID YOU GET OUR LETTER?
YES, I HAVE IT IN FRONT OF ME NOW. I MUST SAY, I'M FLATTERED THAT BOTH YOU AND THE MAYOR WANT ME TO CHAIR THIS "REBUILD METROPOLIS" COMMITTEE...


...BUT I'D HAVE THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE THE LOGICAL CHOICE TO HEAD SUCH A PROJECT. YOU HAVE SUCH A HUGE STAKE IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY--!
TRUE ENOUGH... BUT LEXCORP'S INTERESTS EXTEND WORLDWIDE... AND THE EFFECTS OF MY FATHER'S DEATH ON BUSINESS HAVE BEEN FAR-REACHING!
NO, I HAVE MY HANDS FULL, GETTING CORPORATE HOLDINGS BACK ON A FIRM FOOTING. BUT--YOU, COLLIN--YOU HAVE THE ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS WE NEED TO MAKE THIS CITY SHINE AGAIN!
WELL, LUTHOR--!
PLEASE, CALL ME LEX! WE NEED YOU, COLLIN...

...METROPOLIS NEEDS YOU! WHAT DO YOU SAY?
OF COURSE. I'LL NEED A FEW DAYS TO PREPARE, SHUFFLE SCHEDULES AND SUCH.
AH, BLESS YOU, MATE!

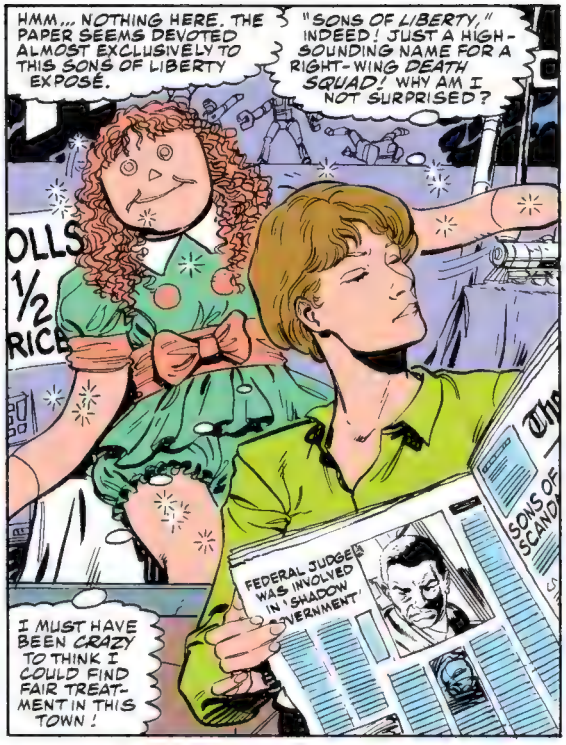

GOOD NEWS, LEX?
THE BEST, LOVE! THE PUBLISHER OF NEWSTIME HAS AGREED TO RUN THE COMMITTEE! NOW I'M FREE TO TURN MY ATTENTION TO OTHER MATTERS!
WHAT WOULD MY SUPERGIRL SAY TO A LITTLE JAPANESE VACATION, EH?

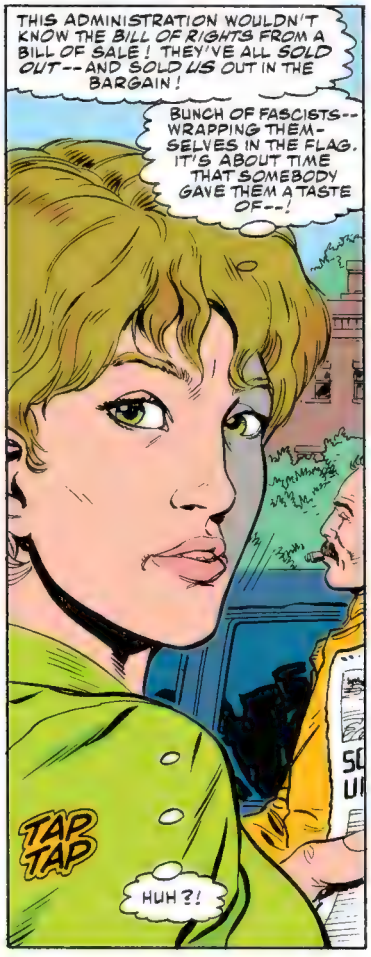

SOUNDS MOST DELIGHTFUL, LUTHOR-SAN.

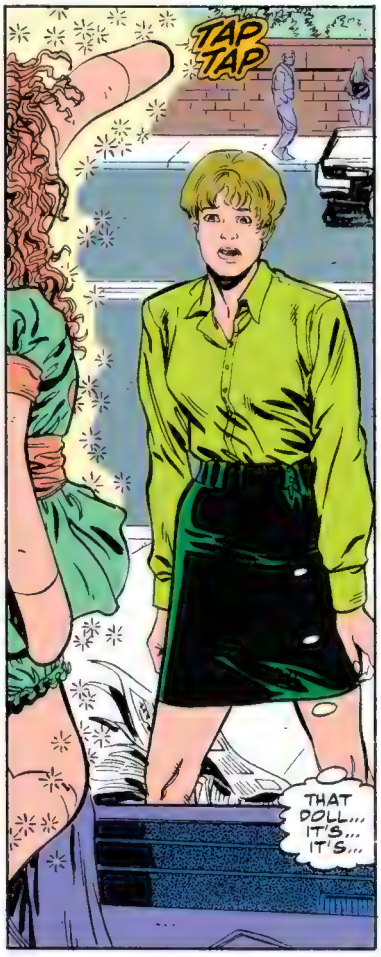
YOU ARE THE DELIGHTFUL ONE, MY GORGEOUS LITTLE CHAMELEON!
AM I?
OH, YES...YOU'RE EVERYONE I'VE EVER LOVED!

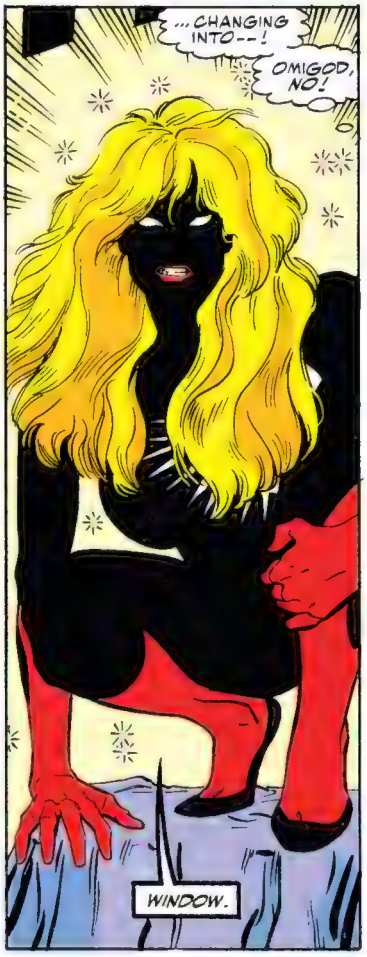
WASHINGTON, D.C. THE WAKEFIELD PRISON FACILITY...
HELLO, MR. SANCHEZ. HAVE A SEAT.
I'LL STAND, THANKS.
I TAKE IT THAT YOU'RE MY VISITOR? I DON'T KNOW YOU FROM ADAM.
NO, BUT I KNOW YOU... OR RATHER, I KNOW THAT YOU FLEW HELI-COPTER BACKUP FOR AGENT LIBERTY... BEFORE SUPERMAN GROUNDED YOU.* I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT.
LOOK, I ALREADY TOLD THOSE OTHER COPS ALL THAT I'M GONNA SAY!
I'M NOT A COP, SANCHEZ--
*AGAIN, IN ADVENTURES #492.
--I'M A REPORTER WITH THE METROPOLIS DAILY PLANET. MY NAME IS CLARK KENT.
I--I'VE HEARD OF YOU. LIBERTY SAID YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR BUSTING UP THE INTERGANG CRIME SYNDICATE.*
I HAD HELP... SOME OF IT FROM AGENT LIBERTY. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE'S STILL HELPING ME. LISTEN TO THIS...
* IN SUPERMAN #60.
...WHAT DID YOU THINK THIS ORGANIZATION WAS FOR, AGENT? GIVING OUT PARKING TICKETS?
I'M THE JUDGE, HARRIMAN WAS THE JURY, AND YOU WERE THE EXECU-TIONER.
AGENT LIBERTY SENT ME THAT TAPE OF KRAMER'S CONFESSION... AND A LOT MORE.
THE JUSTICE DE-PARTMENT HAS COPIES OF EVERY-THING. KRAMER AND HARRIMAN ARE DEAD... AGENT LIBERTY IS MISSING.
YOU'VE NOTHING LEFT TO LOSE.
JUST MY LIFE, KENT. BUT... LISTEN, GET ME TRANSFERRED TO A SAFE HOUSE...
--AND I'LL TELL YOU PLENTY! THE STUFF I KNOW...

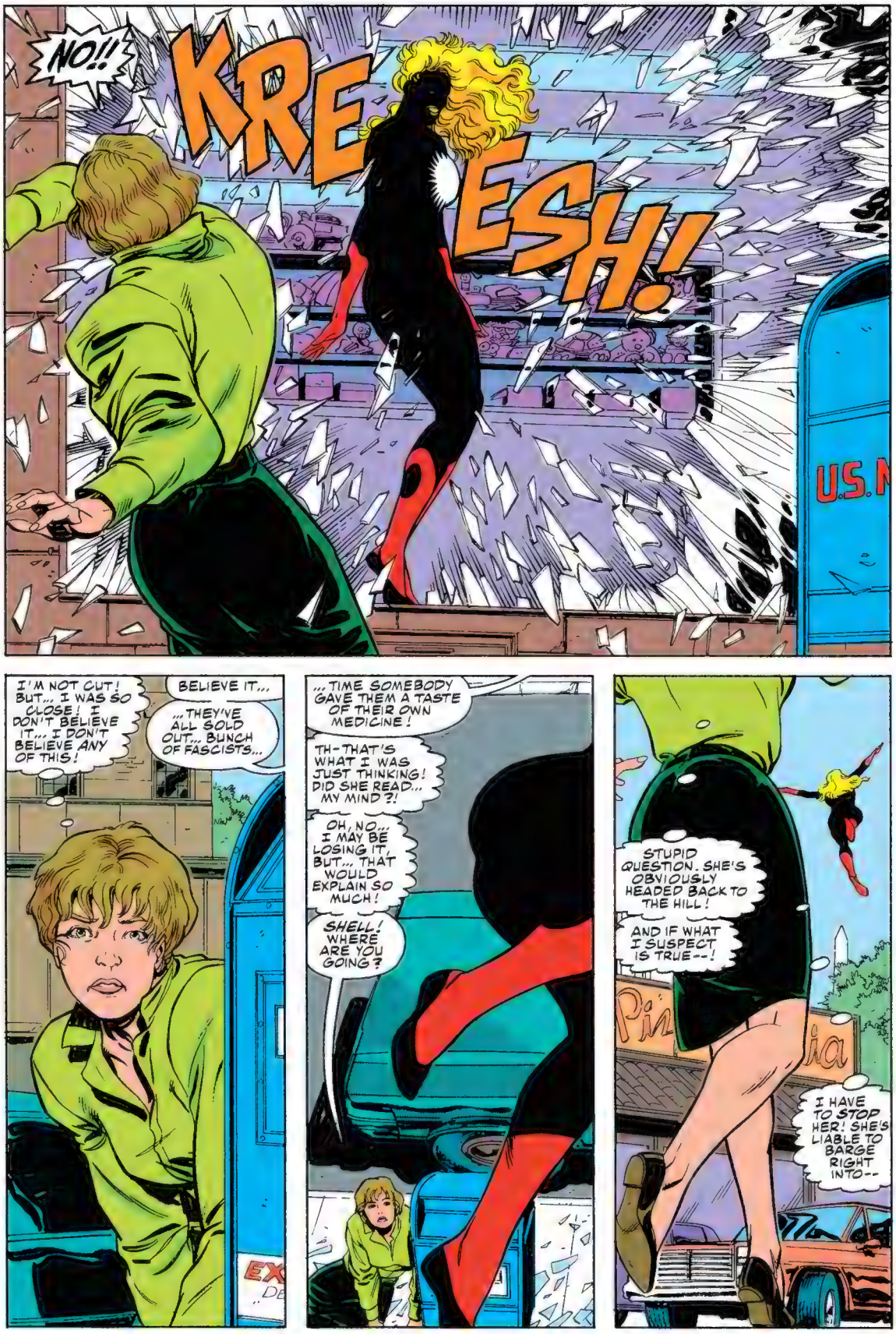
"... COULD FILL THE FRONT PAGES OF A DOZEN PAPERS!"
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW. I WONDER HOW LONG SHELLSHOCK HAS BEEN IN TOWN?
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE POST?
HUGHES
DOLLS ½ PRI
IMAGINE!
ANDREW HUGHES, PROPRIETOR
OPEN
IF IT'S NEWS, IT'S THE Post

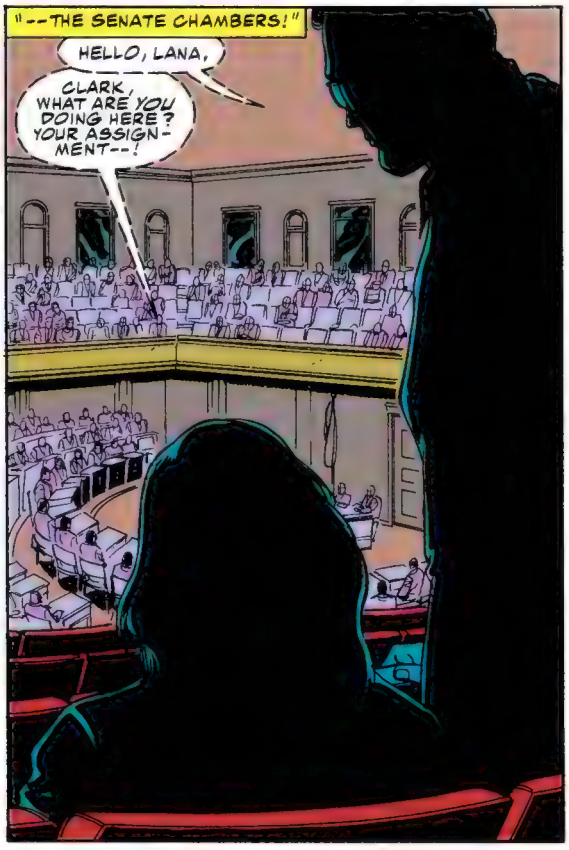

HMM... NOTHING HERE. THE PAPER SEEMS DEVOTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO THIS SONS OF LIBERTY EXPOSÉ.
"SONS OF LIBERTY," INDEED! JUST A HIGH-SOUNDING NAME FOR A RIGHT-WING DEATH SQUAD! WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?
FEDERAL JUDGE WAS INVOLVED IN 'SHADOW
I MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY TO THINK I COULD FIND FAIR TREATMENT IN THIS TOWN!


THIS ADMINISTRATION WOULDN'T KNOW THE BILL OF RIGHTS FROM A BILL OF SALE! THEY'VE ALL SOLD OUT--AND SOLD US OUT IN THE BARGAIN!
BUNCH OF FASCISTS--WRAPPING THEMSELVES IN THE FLAG. IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT SOMEBODY GAVE THEM A TASTE OF--!
TAP TAP
HUH?!


TAP TAP
THAT DOLL... IT'S... IT'S...

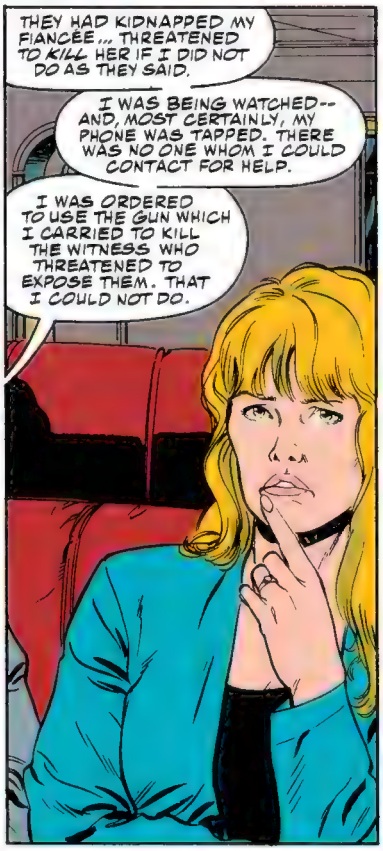

... CHANGING INTO--!
OMIGOD, NO!
WINDOW.

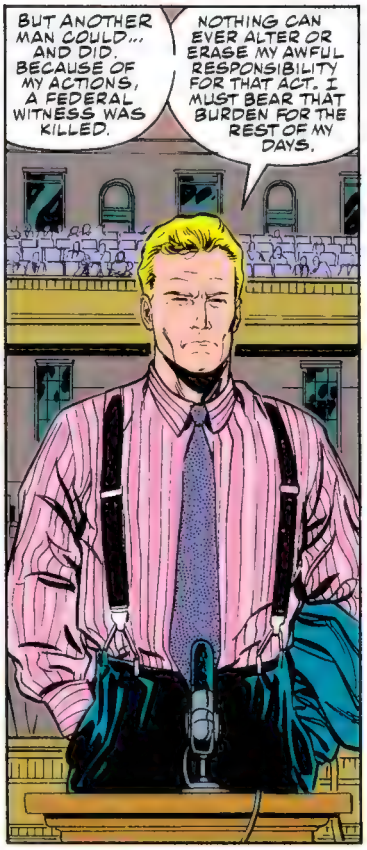

NO!!
KRE
ESH!
U.S.N
I'M NOT CUT! BUT... I WAS SO CLOSE! I DON'T BELIEVE IT... I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS!
BELIEVE IT...
...THEY'VE ALL SOLD OUT... BUNCH OF FASCISTS...
...TIME SOMEBODY GAVE THEM A TASTE OF THEIR OWN MEDICINE!
TH-THAT'S WHAT I WAS JUST THINKING! DID SHE READ... MY MIND?!
OH, NO... I MAY BE LOSING IT, BUT... THAT WOULD EXPLAIN SO MUCH!
SHELL! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
STUPID QUESTION. SHE'S OBVIOUSLY HEADED BACK TO THE HILL!
AND IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE--!
I HAVE TO STOP HER! SHE'S LIABLE TO BARGE RIGHT INTO--

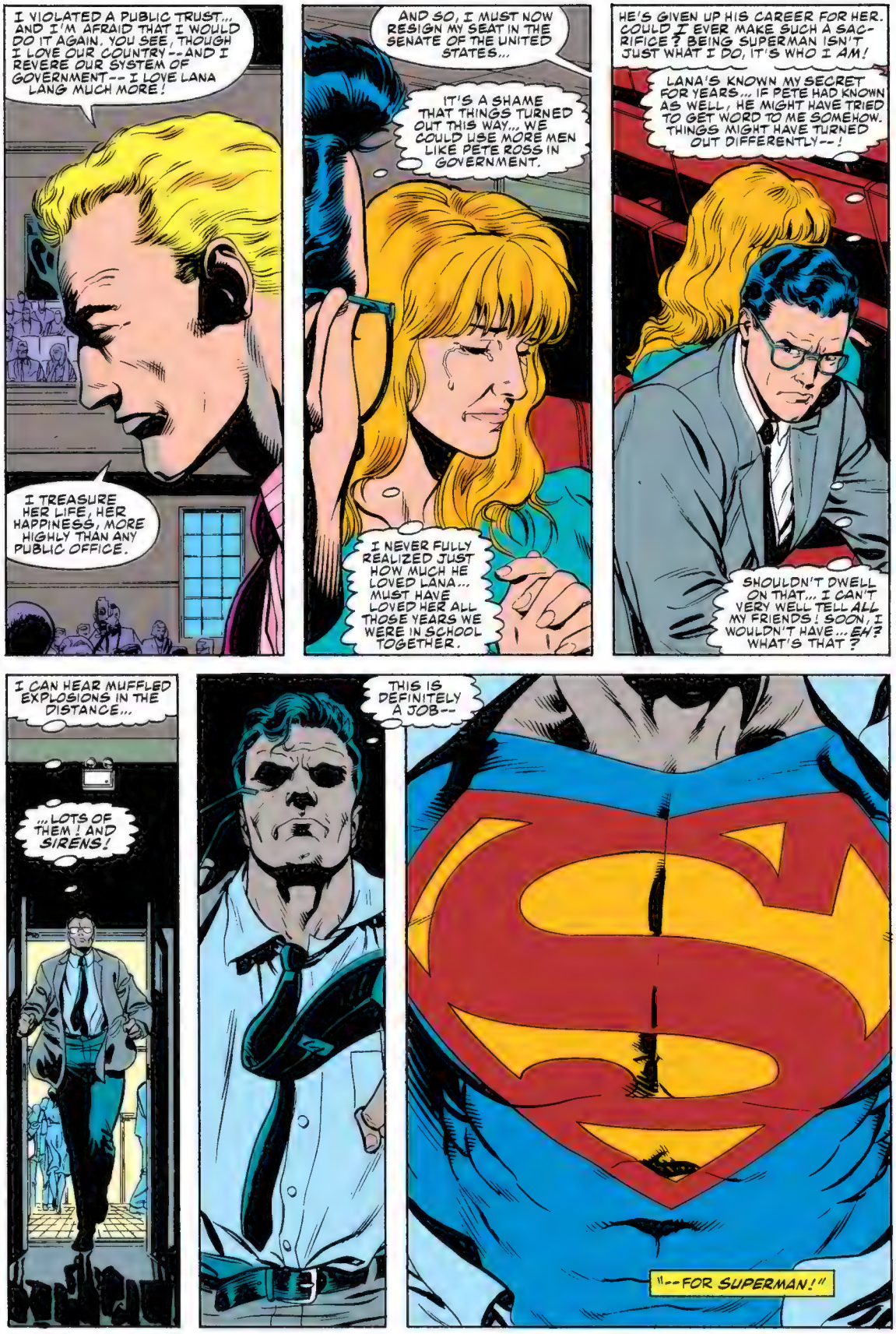

"--THE SENATE CHAMBERS!"
HELLO, LANA.
CLARK, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? YOUR ASSIGNMENT--!

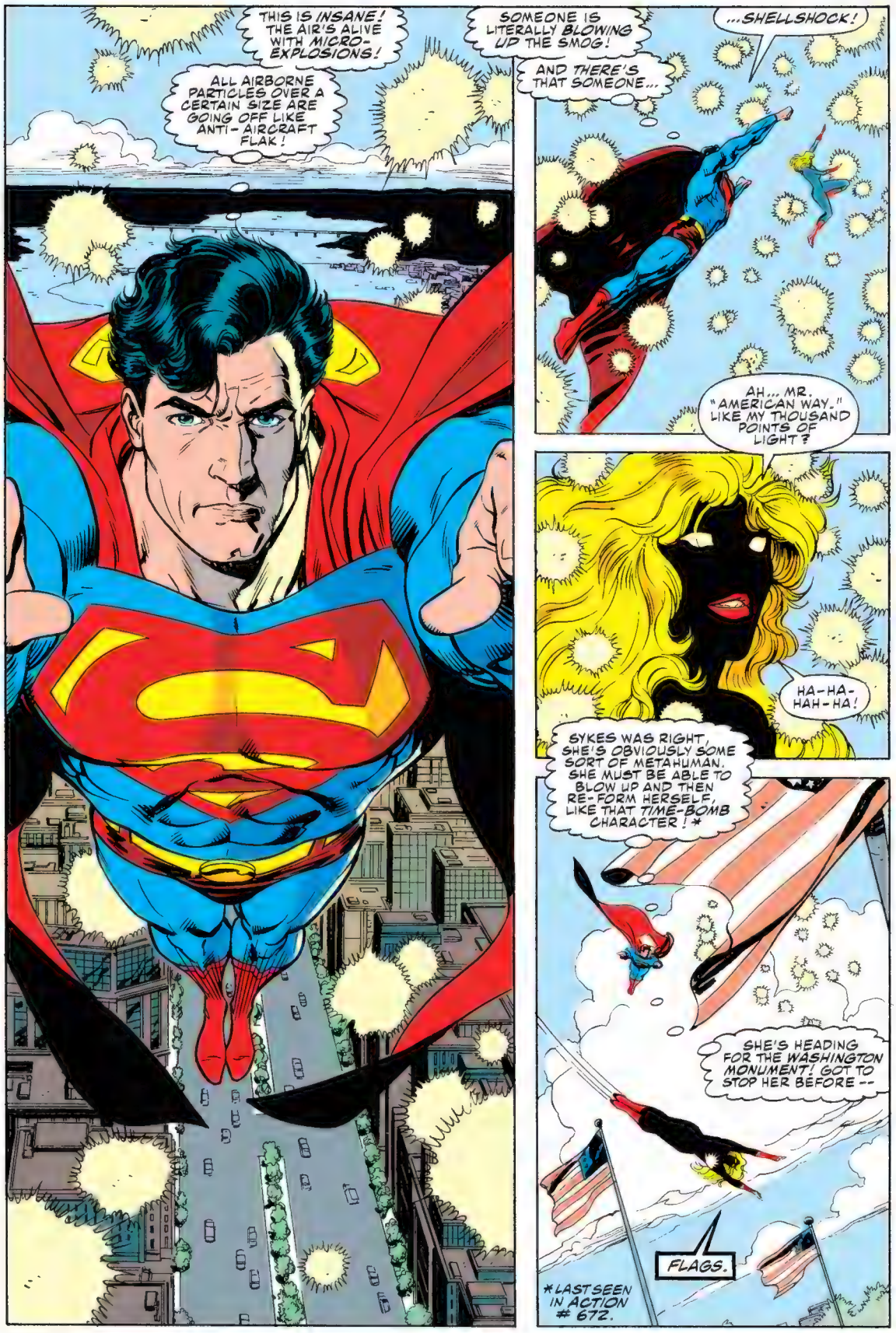
I WRAPPED IT UP AS QUICKLY AS I COULD. I THOUGHT YOU AND PETE MIGHT NEED A LITTLE EXTRA MORAL SUPPORT.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
THE PRESIDENT PRO TEM JUST GAVE PETER PERMISSION TO SPEAK...
MISTER PRESIDENT... MEMBERS OF THE SENATE... LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...

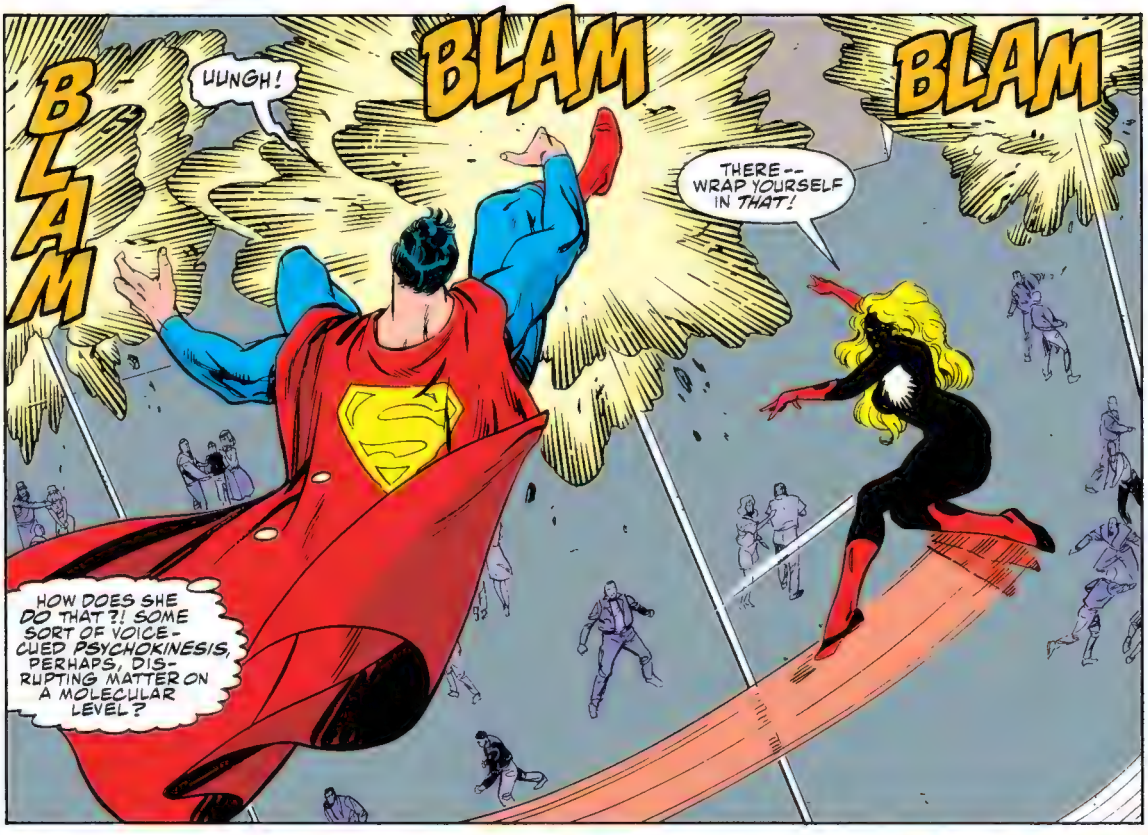
...IT IS NO SECRET WHY WE ARE HERE TODAY. MY COLLEAGUES HAVE GATHERED TO VOTE FOR MY CENSURE. WERE I IN THEIR POSITION, I WOULD NO DOUBT DO THE SAME.
THIS PAST WEEK, I SMUGGLED A LOADED GUN INTO A HEARING ROOM ON THE ORDERS OF A SECRET SOCIETY, THE SONS OF LIBERTY.
THE SONS ACTED AS A SHADOW GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE PENTAGON, THE JUDICIARY... PERHAPS EVEN WITHIN CONGRESS ITSELF.


THEY HAD KIDNAPPED MY FIANCÉE... THREATENED TO KILL HER IF I DID NOT DO AS THEY SAID.
I WAS BEING WATCHED--AND, MOST CERTAINLY, MY PHONE WAS TAPPED. THERE WAS NO ONE WHOM I COULD CONTACT FOR HELP.
I WAS ORDERED TO USE THE GUN WHICH I CARRIED TO KILL THE WITNESS WHO THREATENED TO EXPOSE THEM. THAT I COULD NOT DO.


BUT ANOTHER MAN COULD... AND DID. BECAUSE OF MY ACTIONS, A FEDERAL WITNESS WAS KILLED.
NOTHING CAN EVER ALTER OR ERASE MY AWFUL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT ACT. I MUST BEAR THAT BURDEN FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS.

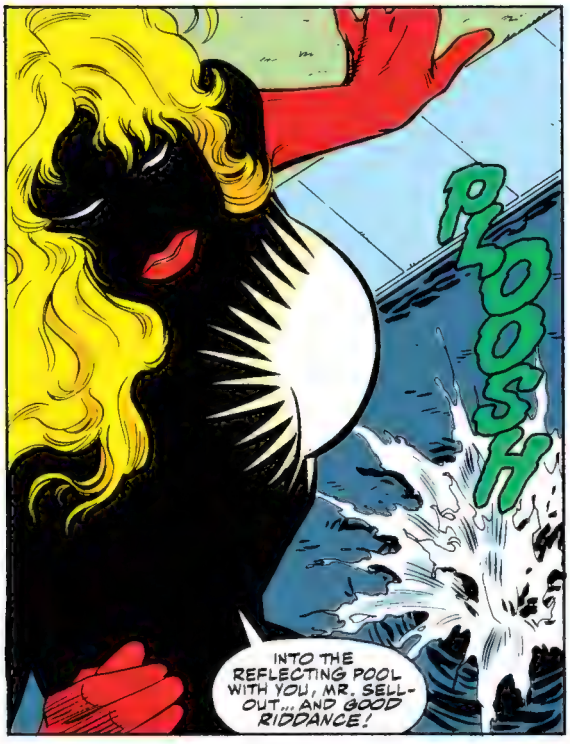

I VIOLATED A PUBLIC TRUST... AND I'M AFRAID THAT I WOULD DO IT AGAIN. YOU SEE, THOUGH I LOVE OUR COUNTRY--AND I REVERE OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT--I LOVE LANA LANG MUCH MORE!
I TREASURE HER LIFE, HER HAPPINESS, MORE HIGHLY THAN ANY PUBLIC OFFICE.
AND SO, I MUST NOW RESIGN MY SEAT IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES...
IT'S A SHAME THAT THINGS TURNED OUT THIS WAY... WE COULD USE MORE MEN LIKE PETE ROSS IN GOVERNMENT.
I NEVER FULLY REALIZED JUST HOW MUCH HE LOVED LANA... MUST HAVE LOVED HER ALL THOSE YEARS WE WERE IN SCHOOL TOGETHER.
HE'S GIVEN UP HIS CAREER FOR HER. COULD I EVER MAKE SUCH A SACRIFICE? BEING SUPERMAN ISN'T JUST WHAT I DO, IT'S WHO I AM!
LANA'S KNOWN MY SECRET FOR YEARS... IF PETE HAD KNOWN AS WELL, HE MIGHT HAVE TRIED TO GET WORD TO ME SOMEHOW. THINGS MIGHT HAVE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY--!
SHOULDN'T DWELL ON THAT... I CAN'T VERY WELL TELL ALL MY FRIENDS! SOON, I WOULDN'T HAVE... EH? WHAT'S THAT?
I CAN HEAR MUFFLED EXPLOSIONS IN THE DISTANCE...
...LOTS OF THEM! AND SIRENS!
THIS IS DEFINITELY A JOB--
"--FOR SUPERMAN!"


THIS IS INSANE! THE AIR'S ALIVE WITH MICRO-EXPLOSIONS!
ALL AIRBORNE PARTICLES OVER A CERTAIN SIZE ARE GOING OFF LIKE ANTI-AIRCRAFT FLAK!
SOMEONE IS LITERALLY BLOWING UP THE SMOG!
AND THERE'S THAT SOMEONE...
...SHELLSHOCK!
AH... MR. "AMERICAN WAY." LIKE MY THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT?
HA-HA-HAH-HA!
SYKES WAS RIGHT, SHE'S OBVIOUSLY SOME SORT OF METAHUMAN. SHE MUST BE ABLE TO BLOW UP AND THEN RE-FORM HERSELF, LIKE THAT TIME-BOMB CHARACTER!*
SHE'S HEADING FOR THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT! GOT TO STOP HER BEFORE --
FLAGS.
*LAST SEEN IN ACTION # 672.


BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
UUNGH!
THERE -- WRAP YOURSELF IN THAT!
HOW DOES SHE DO THAT?! SOME SORT OF VOICE-CUED PSYCHOKINESIS, PERHAPS, DISRUPTING MATTER ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL?

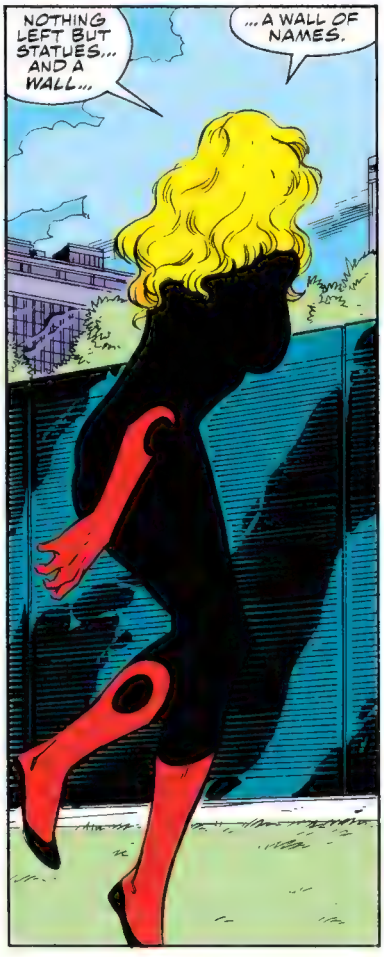
WELL, HOWEVER IT WORKS, I HAVE TO STOP HER BEFORE SOMEBODY IS SERIOUSLY HURT!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY AGAIN!

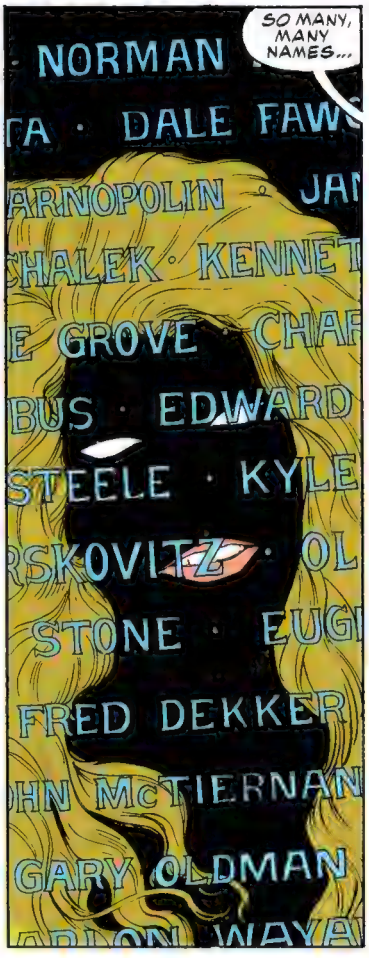
NO?
CAPE.
BLA
DOOM

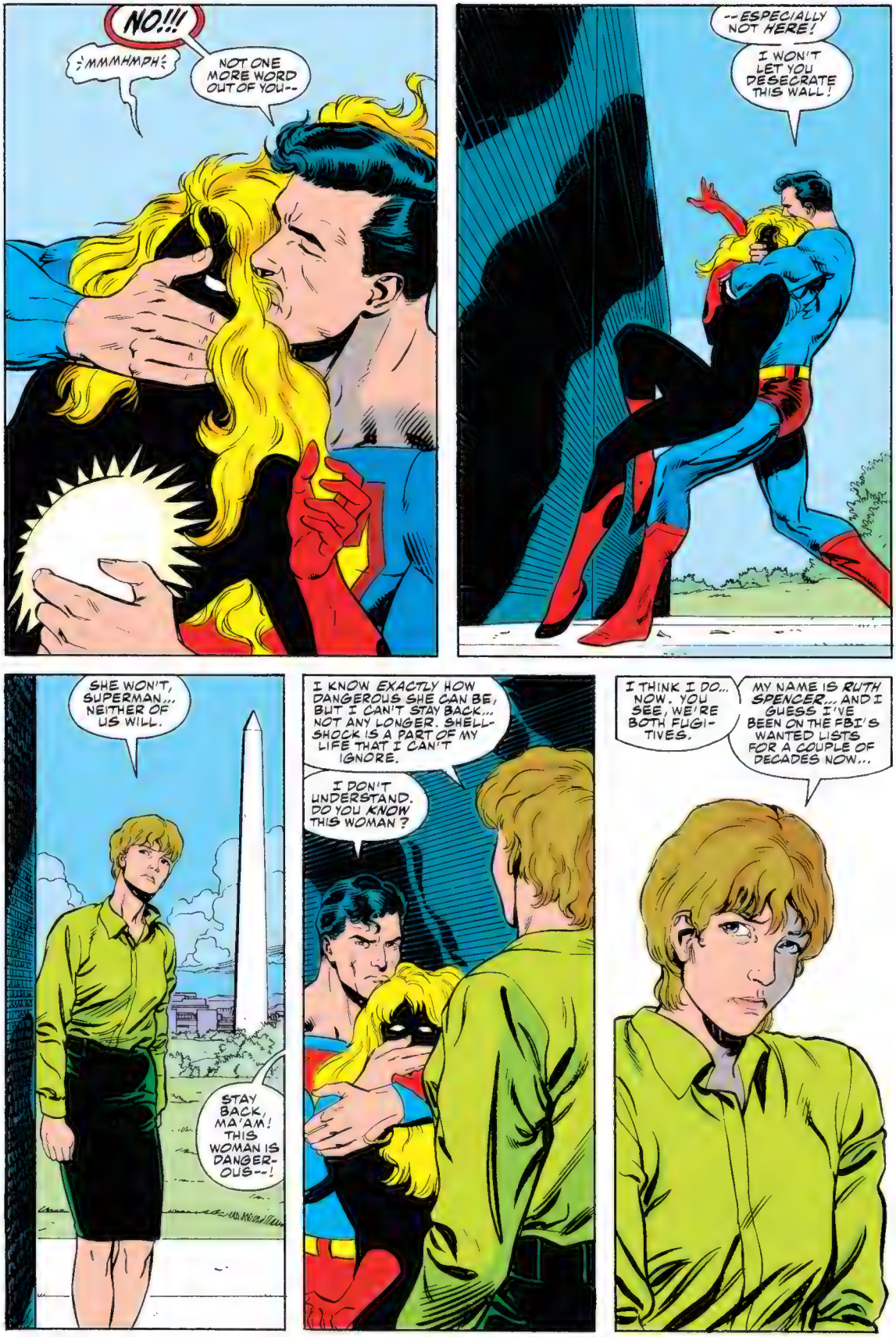

PLOOSH
INTO THE REFLECTING POOL WITH YOU, MR. SELL-OUT... AND GOOD RIDDANCE!

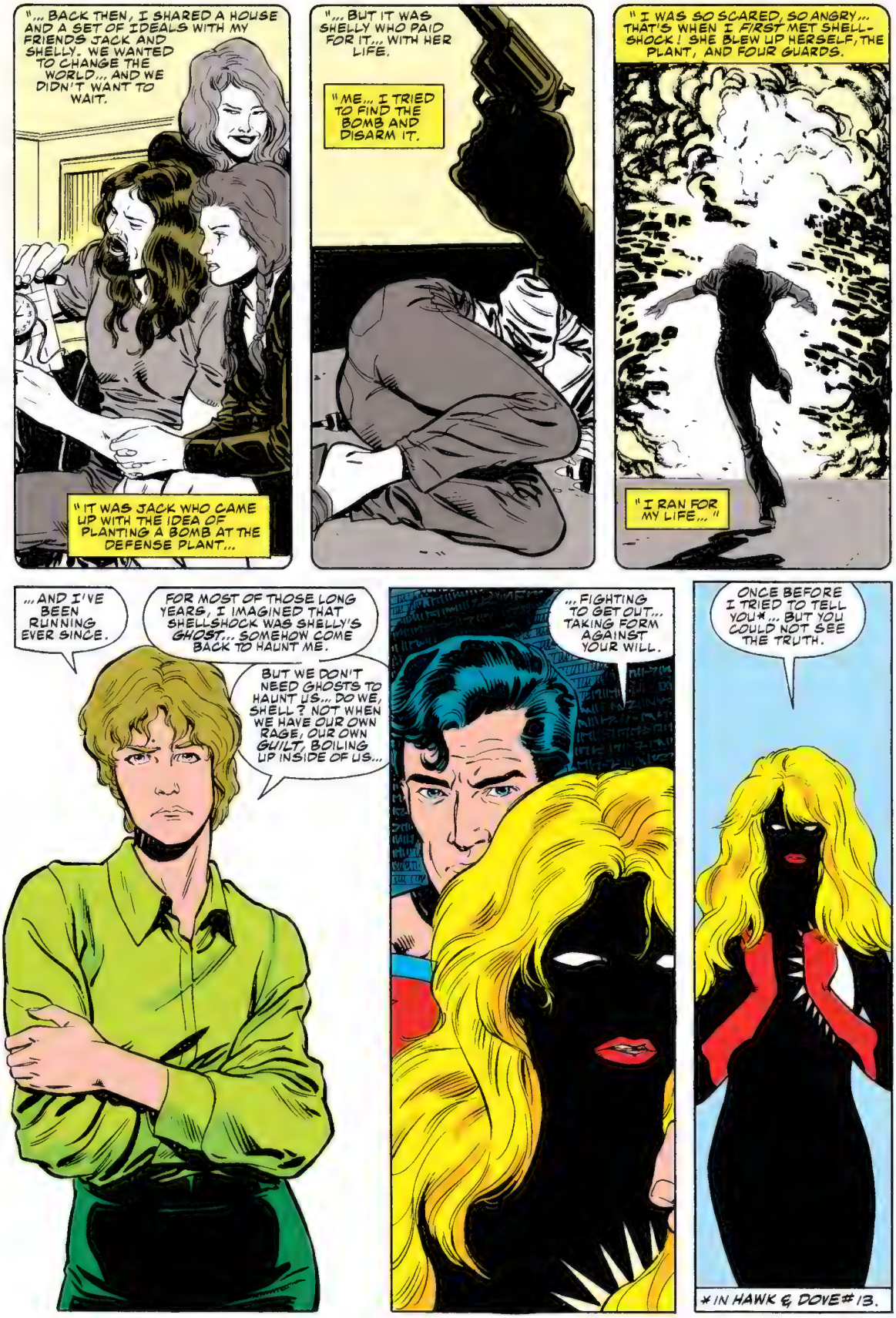
NOT SO HIGH-AND-MIGHTY NOW.
NOW.
NOW?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW.
WHAT--?

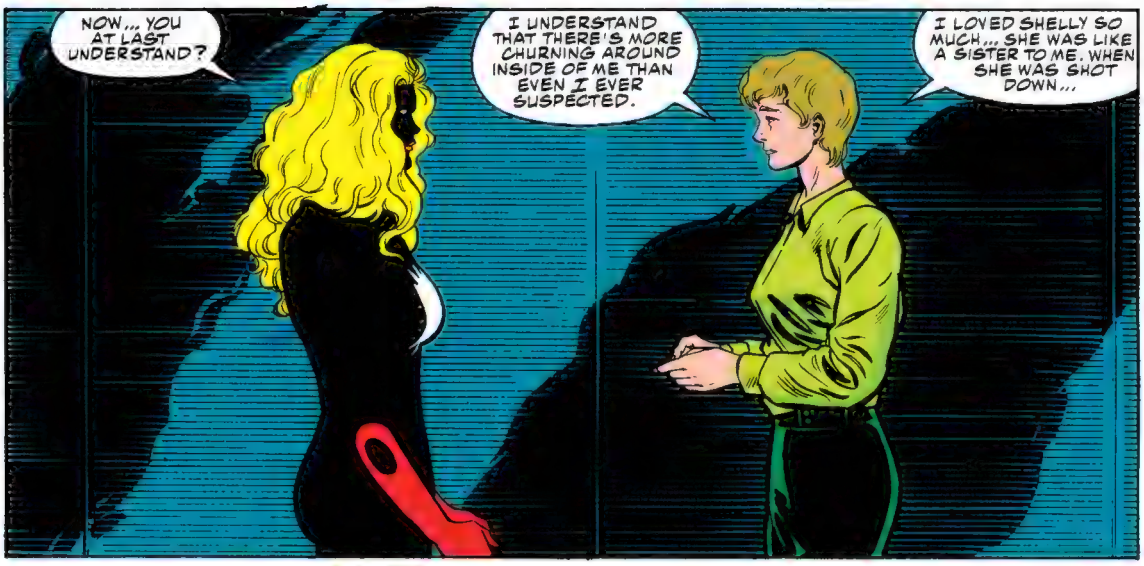
HMM... NOTHING HERE.
THE PEOPLE HAVE ALL FLED AT MY APPROACH.

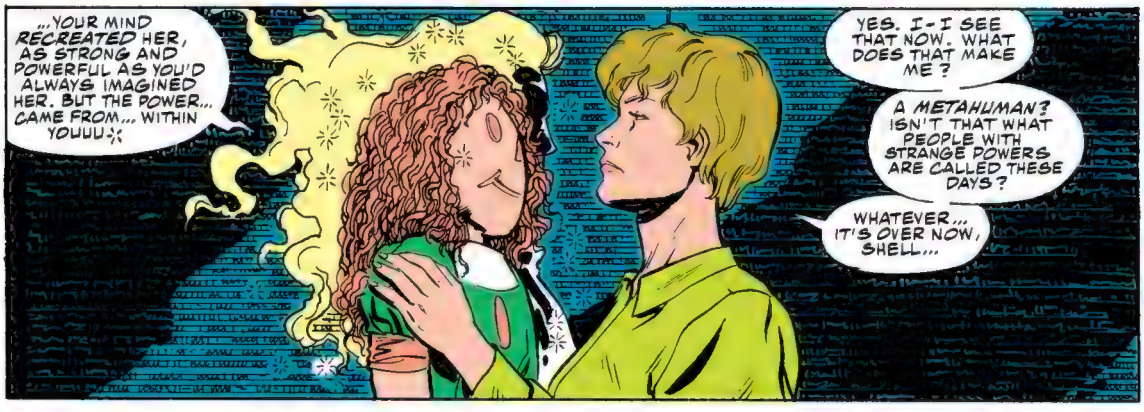

NOTHING LEFT BUT STATUES... AND A WALL...
...A WALL OF NAMES.

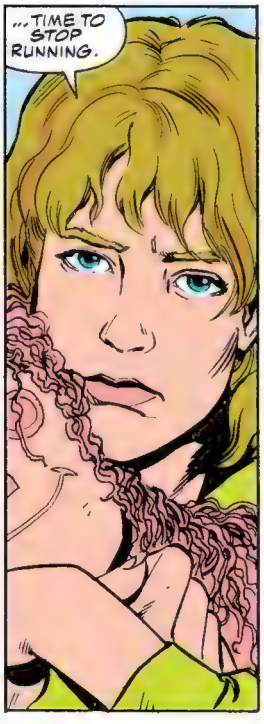

SO MANY, MANY NAMES...
NORMAN
DALE
GROVE
EDWARD
STEELE
KYLE
STONE
FRED DEKKER
McTIERNAN
GARY OLDMAN

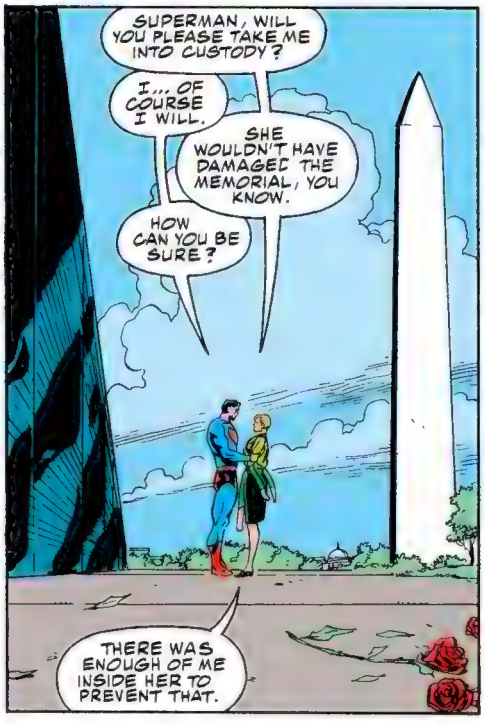

NO!!!
:MMMHMPH:
NOT ONE MORE WORD OUT OF YOU--
--ESPECIALLY NOT HERE!
I WON'T LET YOU DESECRATE THIS WALL!
SHE WON'T, SUPERMAN... NEITHER OF US WILL.
STAY BACK, MA'AM! THIS WOMAN IS DANGER-OUS--!
I KNOW EXACTLY HOW DANGEROUS SHE CAN BE, BUT I CAN'T STAY BACK... NOT ANY LONGER. SHELL-SHOCK IS A PART OF MY LIFE THAT I CAN'T IGNORE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. DO YOU KNOW THIS WOMAN?
I THINK I DO... NOW. YOU SEE, WE'RE BOTH FUGI-TIVES.
MY NAME IS RUTH SPENCER... AND I GUESS I'VE BEEN ON THE FBI'S WANTED LISTS FOR A COUPLE OF DECADES NOW...


"... BACK THEN, I SHARED A HOUSE AND A SET OF IDEALS WITH MY FRIENDS JACK AND SHELLY. WE WANTED TO CHANGE THE WORLD... AND WE DIDN'T WANT TO WAIT.
"IT WAS JACK WHO CAME UP WITH THE IDEA OF PLANTING A BOMB AT THE DEFENSE PLANT...
"... BUT IT WAS SHELLY WHO PAID FOR IT... WITH HER LIFE.
"ME... I TRIED TO FIND THE BOMB AND DISARM IT.
"I WAS SO SCARED, SO ANGRY... THAT'S WHEN I FIRST MET SHELL-SHOCK! SHE BLEW UP HERSELF, THE PLANT, AND FOUR GUARDS.
"I RAN FOR MY LIFE..."
... AND I'VE BEEN RUNNING EVER SINCE.
FOR MOST OF THOSE LONG YEARS, I IMAGINED THAT SHELLSHOCK WAS SHELLY'S GHOST... SOMEHOW COME BACK TO HAUNT ME.
BUT WE DON'T NEED GHOSTS TO HAUNT US... DO WE, SHELL? NOT WHEN WE HAVE OUR OWN RAGE, OUR OWN GUILT, BOILING UP INSIDE OF US...
... FIGHTING TO GET OUT... TAKING FORM AGAINST YOUR WILL.
ONCE BEFORE I TRIED TO TELL YOU*... BUT YOU COULD NOT SEE THE TRUTH.
*IN HAWK & DOVE #13.


NOW... YOU AT LAST UNDERSTAND?
I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S MORE CHURNING AROUND INSIDE OF ME THAN EVEN I EVER SUSPECTED.
I LOVED SHELLY SO MUCH... SHE WAS LIKE A SISTER TO ME. WHEN SHE WAS SHOT DOWN...


...YOUR MIND *RECREATED* HER, AS STRONG AND POWERFUL AS YOU'D ALWAYS IMAGINED HER. BUT THE POWER... CAME FROM... WITHIN YOUUU...
YES. I-I SEE THAT NOW. WHAT DOES THAT MAKE ME?
A *METAHUMAN*? ISN'T THAT WHAT PEOPLE WITH STRANGE POWERS ARE CALLED THESE DAYS?
WHATEVER... IT'S OVER NOW, SHELL...




SUPERMAN, WILL YOU PLEASE TAKE ME INTO CUSTODY?
I... OF COURSE I WILL.
SHE WOULDN'T HAVE DAMAGED THE MEMORIAL, YOU KNOW.
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?
THERE WAS ENOUGH OF ME INSIDE HER TO PREVENT THAT.

"THIS WALL, AFTER ALL, ISN'T ABOUT GOVERNMENT OR POLITICS...

JAMES A SPENCER

"... IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE AND LOSS.

SPENCER · EAR

"AND WE ALL LOST SO MUCH IN THAT WAR."

SPENCER

End

Superman Post-Crisis Chronology
Volume 055 The Sons of Liberty

"Almerac or Bust!", first appeared in Justice League America issue #63, released April, 1992
Dan Jurgens (writer), Dan Jurgens (penciller), Rick Burchett (inker)

"The Revenge of Starbreaker", first appeared in Justice League America issue #64, released May, 1992
(writer), Dan Jurgens (penciller), Rick Burchett (inker)

"Of Ashes and Justice", first appeared in Justice League America issue #65, released June, 1992
(writer), Dan Jurgens (penciller), Rick Burchett (inker)

"--Killing is Serious Business", first appeared in Superman issue #69, released May, 1992
Dan Jurgens (writer), Keith Williams (penciller), Peter Krause (penciller), Peter Krause (penciller), Keith Williams (inker), Keith Williams (inker), Peter Krause (inker)

"...And Justice For All!", first appeared in The Adventures of Superman issue #492, released May, 1992
Jerry Ordway (writer), Dan Jurgens (penciller), Keith Williams (penciller), Peter Krause (penciller), Keith Williams (inker), Peter Krause (inker), Walter Simonson (inker)

"Shellshocked", first appeared in Action Comics issue #679, released May, 1992
Roger Stern (writer), Art Thibert (penciller), Jackson Butch Guice (penciller), Art Thibert (inker), Denis Rodier (inker)

DC

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA

63
JUN 92

JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA

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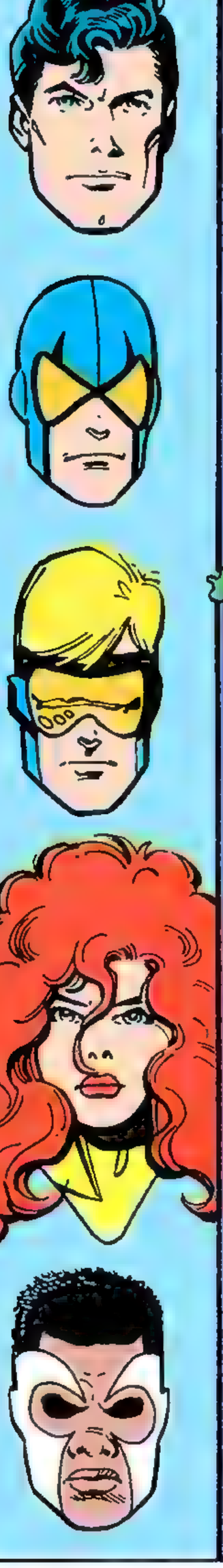

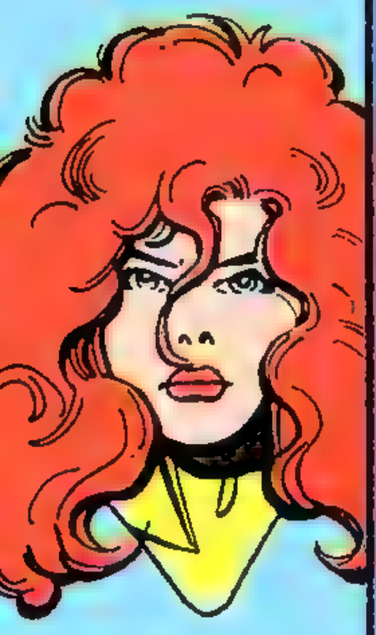

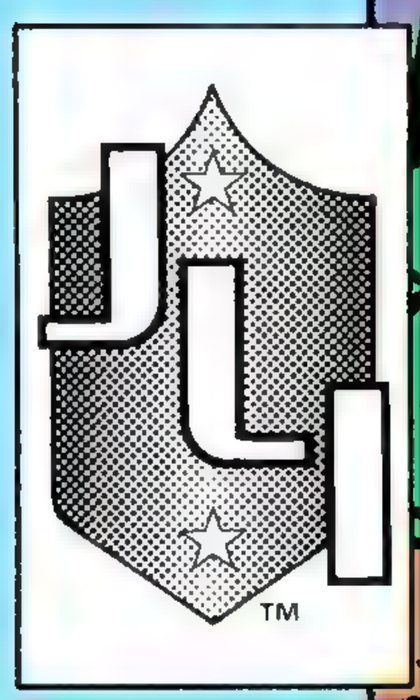

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THE REVENGE OF STARBREAKER!

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AT WAR WITH STARBREAKER!™

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SUPERMAN

1992
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FOR LIFE AND LIBERTY

THE SONS OF LIBERTY: MURDERERS!

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1992
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THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN®

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492
JUL 92

CIVIL WAR!

BY ORDWAY, KRAUSE & MACHLAN

AGENT LIBERTY™ GOES BAD!

SUPERMAN
IN ACTION COMICS
679
JUL 92
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1992
28
CAPITOL OFFENSE!
BY ROGER STERN, JACKSON GUICE AND DENIS RODIER